

## At Large Council Candidate

<b>Lisa Gore</b>	
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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>	50
<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>The average annual teacher turnover rate across D.C. public schools and public charter schools is and has consistently been about 25 percent – compared to a national average of 16 percent. I will use all legislative tools that will not only increase teacher pay, but also make their jobs fulfilling and rewarding without undue stress and harm. By reducing student-to-staff ratios in schools and expanding the availability of services like school psychologists, nurses, and counselors, the school environment not only becomes conducive to learning, but also good for the teachers as well. I'm in favor in of seeking alternative teacher evaluation tool. IMPACT, as used now, is not well-received by staff and has been shown to be biased. In particular, we need to address the needs and concerns of families and teachers in navigating the challenges of COVID-19. Teachers are paying attention to how DCPS central offices are leading students and staff in the pandemic and being responsive to their needs. We must listen to and learn from the experiences of our students, families, and teachers to strengthen policy choices that provide the safest alternatives for long-term recovery. I believe DCPS but provide competitive teacher signing and retention bonuses, and well maintained buildings as my platform calls for. Finally, I will work with the teacher's union to understand what they need to succeed as well.</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>My first goal would be to ensure there is a comprehensive plan that includes both planned investments and technological infrastructure. I would focus on appropriate IT staffing and support functions including device maintenance and replacement, and digital literacy for our students. Additionally, we must also focus on the oversight of the Empowered Learners program. Based on the recent news reports over 10,000 technology devices have gone missing. These are vital resources that are budgeted from taxpayer dollars for students. The digital divide is a racial equity issue and we know that technology and access to high-speed internet impacts Black and brown residents the most. The city has fallen short in its plans for device distribution, and the Mayor's initiative to boost connectivity for low income families ends in 2022. We need to do more. Additionally, the DC auditor recommended a comprehensive, multi-year technology plan. I would support this recommendation which would provide the public an outline of how school technology will be managed and funded, including how DCPS, OCTO and the DC Department of General Services will coordinate to provide technology infrastructure that works well for all of our schools.</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>As a DC Public School mom, I believe our public schools are not isolated institutions; they are central to the well-being of our kids, families, and communities. Our children, parents, and teachers deserve a responsive school system that addresses their needs and provides support and services that make it possible for every child to succeed. We must have public schools that enable our children to achieve a quality education regardless of where they live or the school they attend. DC needs a New Deal for public education built on policy choices that dismantle the historical harm of structural inequalities and puts the needs of kids, families, and teachers first. My platform specifically calls for an investment in a Green New Deal for public schools that centers on creating an environmentally healthy school environment. A Green New Deal in public schools will install energy-efficient windows, electric heat pumps, and renewable energy rooftops to reduce energy consumption and transition to net-zero energy consumption. It will also prioritize green retrofitting and school modernization projects that first target the most at-risk schools. This includes transportation policies that make our children’s passage to and from schools and throughout our communities safe. I will support zero-emission school bus fleets. Our teachers and children deserve academic environments that prioritize environmental justice and are conducive to teaching and learning.</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>Teacher pay raises: DCPS teachers have not had an approved contract negotiated in over three years. We need to ensure our teachers are paid fairly. Equitable distribution of school resources: We all know that for decades communities in Ward 7 and 8 have been denied the equitable distribution of funding. One of my first steps would be to review the school budgets to determine the sufficient amount of funding needed to bolster neglected educational campuses in Black and brown communities. Learning Loss and mental health supports: Academically, we know students have fallen behind due to the unpreparedness of our city’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been a champion of increasing Out of School Time funding, expanding extra curricular activities and creating the infrastructure for a permanent system of hybrid learning models. I am interested in working with local community organizations like Byteback to bring at-home technology courses to families to increase technological literacy. I believe we must also focus on mental health resources and supports for our schools.</p>	

<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> My campaign focuses on justice. I believe we must protect and invest in our neighborhood schools, especially understanding that we have communities that are not equitably funded as others.	
<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: it's been a few years, a new one may be helpful.</b>	
<b>Should DCPS have budget protections because of its responsibilities as the school system-of-right?</b>	Yes
<b>Comments</b>	
<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>	
In the 2019–2020 school year, there were 347 contracted security guards and special police officers inside DCPS schools, and 98 MPD SROs outside of DCPS schools, but only 235 budgeted social workers, 127 budgeted psychologists, and 125 budgeted counselors. The same year, there was one security officer or special police officer for every 129 students, but one budgeted social worker for every 217 students, one budgeted psychologist for every 402 students, and one budgeted counselor for every 408 students. Even with the Council’s legislation to do away with MPD contracts, it’s clear that allocated funds are still heavily tied to policing schools and not the health and growth of DC students. As a sitting Councilwoman, my role will be to flip these statistics for more mental health and trauma informed services to the least number of security and armed forces in school buildings throughout the city. A 2017 national study found that, beginning in 1999, arrest rates of children increased substantially after schools received federal grants to hire police officers. According to the study, each additional police officer hired led to about 2.5 extra in-school arrests annually of children between ages 7 and 14. Other studies have shown the hiring of officers increased school suspension rates and have shown that Black students are much more likely to be arrested in school. As the studies indicate, the topic of measuring safety and security in a police-free environment warrants a broad based discussion with all community stakeholders, with a keen eye on biases. I agree, that we must develop metrics that help us determine the success of this new approach. However, in doing so, we must broaden our perception of safety and security to include aspects of emotional well-being and being mindful of the many biases that come into play in this area.	

<b>Do you support any changes in the way the District of Columbia governs public education?</b>	Yes
<b>What governance reforms would you support for DCPS?</b>	
<b>A DCPS education policy board, appointed by the Mayor, confirmed by Council, with authority to hire and fire the chancellor.</b>	Would consider
<b>An elected DCPS education policy board of education, independent of the Mayor.</b>	Would support
<b>Other governance reforms that you would consider or support for DCPS:</b> Reestablish the Council's Education Committee. Our children's education deserves focused attention that only a dedicated oversight committee can provide. Advance a governance structure for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education independent of Mayoral control. We must have independent and accountable oversight of our schools. Hiring and firing of the Chancellor should not be without Council consideration.	
<b>What governance reforms would you support for the State Board of Education and the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE)?</b>	
<b>State Board of Education with authority to hire and fire the State Superintendent of Education.</b>	Would support
<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> The SBOE should essentially hold similar responsibilities over are education system, but not exclude .	
<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 support
<b>Other changes you would consider or support D.C. Council governance of public education:</b> My platform calls for the re-establishment of the Education Committee.	
<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 consider
<b>Other reforms you would consider or support for PCSB:</b> Charter school boards should have similar oversight and financial obligations that DCPS requires. This includes working with DCPS to include city-wide curriculum development and staff training. Additionally, one of the goals between DCPS and DCPCS should be operating as a Unified School District. This may bridge tensions that we see between the two systems. Both systems should have the same requirements, pay, and response to policy issues like COVID and digital technology.	