

May 24, 2019

The Hon. Phil Mendelson, Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004

The Hon. David Grosso  
Chairman, Committee on Education  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmembers:

I write to share information developed in the Office of the D.C. Auditor's (ODCA) follow up on the report on public school enrollment the Council requested and funded two years ago. We are continuing to review enrollment, mobility, and at-risk funding, and will have a report on at-risk funding to you in the next few weeks. I write today to share information on the significant discrepancies in enrollment of students with disabilities (SWD) in District of Columbia Public Schools comprehensive high schools versus DCPS's application-only high schools, and on current feeder patterns in which students who attended middle schools in Wards 7 and 8 are not well represented in application-only high schools.

### **High school enrollment of students with disabilities**

I realize this issue has been of concern to the Committee on Education for some time now, including receiving testimony in February from Stacey K. Eunnae, Senior Staff Attorney with Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc., who told the joint hearing, that "It is common knowledge in my practice that there are certain DCPS schools considered so 'elite,' they simply refuse to comply with special education laws and DCPS central leadership does nothing about it."

As she noted and as our review of enrollment and mobility data confirms, our selective high schools have between zero and 12 percent SWDs, with an average of 2.8 percent students with disabilities across the four largest 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade selective high schools--Ellington, School Without Walls, Banneker, and McKinley Tech. The average in public schools across the country is about 13 percent students with disabilities. The numbers would indicate that there may be inappropriate practices around the acceptance or counseling out of SWDs in our selective high schools. This is something that has been discussed informally among parents and attorneys who have worked with parents who claim to have been told that in order to attend an application high school a student would be required to disregard their Individual Education Program (IEP) in order to attend the selective school.

The following chart provides the current enrollment statistics for DCPS high schools.

School	UPSFF Enrollment	EL %	At-Risk %	SWD %	Homeless %	Selective
Anacostia High School	378	2%	84%	35%	10%	No
Ron Brown College Preparatory High School	209	4%	56%	31%	3%	No
Ballou High School	879	1%	80%	26%	7%	No
H.D. Woodson High School	484	2%	71%	26%	3%	No
Eastern High School	769	1%	60%	25%	6%	No
Coolidge High School	310	29%	72%	24%	8%	No
Cardozo Education Campus	788	49%	68%	22%	6%	No
Dunbar High School	617	3%	65%	21%	9%	No
Roosevelt High School	690	43%	68%	18%	11%	No
Phelps Architecture, Construction and Engineering High School	260	4%	49%	12%	5%	Yes
Columbia Heights Education Campus	1,240	39%	53%	11%	4%	Yes
Woodrow Wilson High School	1,825	9%	26%	11%	1%	No
Duke Ellington School of the Arts	492	2%	29%	8%	1%	Yes
McKinley Technology High School	620	3%	35%	3%	3%	Yes
Benjamin Banneker High School	480	2%	19%	0%	1%	Yes
School Without Walls High School	591	2%	11%	0%	0%	Yes
<b>DCPS HS Weighted Average</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>5%</b>	

Source: OSSE audited enrollment, SY 2017-18 & Star Report Card data SY 107-18

NOTE: Two education campuses have students in grades 6-12--Columbia Heights Education Campus and Cardozo Education Campus.

These statistics indicate that the issues of selective high schools, equity, and the possibility of discriminatory practices could be a topic for citywide discussion and I encourage you to consider a joint Council hearing on the topic. This could include what the District’s residents want to see in terms of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade pathways and expansion.

To the extent students with disabilities are counseled out of attending selective schools or any school, it could be a result of a combination of inadequate funding for special education services across both sectors, choice, and accountability. I understand that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education is initiating a research project on special education approaches and sufficiency to deal with such issues. A joint hearing could explore such initiatives.

These numbers indicate that the public debate underway on expanding enrollment at Banneker High School could be broadened into a more comprehensive discussion about future planning for our comprehensive high schools, the current underutilization of some of our new facilities, and the challenge of adapting to the high rates of SWDs now served. Our comprehensive high schools and education campuses are likely struggling to meet the needs of the high proportion of students with disabilities they currently serve. Our analysis of at-risk funds is showing that these funds are being inappropriately spent on federally-mandated special education services. Operating schools with 20 percent to 35 percent SWDs is a challenge and could be part of a conversation about decisions to expand selective schools that today are not serving many students with disabilities.

**Feeder patterns for top four largest application-only high schools**

ODCA’s follow-up enrollment analyses also indicate that the application high schools apparently draw primarily from a small number of DCPS schools, charter schools, and private schools, with very few students who attended middle schools in the eastern portion of the District. The following charts indicate the schools from which application high schools drew their incoming students in fall 2017.

**Ellington School for the Arts**

Number	%	School Name
566	100%	Total incoming students in school year 17-18
378	66.8%	Ellington School of the Arts
70	12.4%	<i>Not DCPS or charter</i>
11	1.9%	Hardy MS
10	1.8%	Deal MS
10	1.8%	Stuart Hobson MS (Capitol Hill Cluster)
7	1.2%	William E. Doar Jr PCS
5	0.9%	Oyster Adams Bilingual School (Oyster)
5	0.9%	Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS

Number	%	School Name
N<5	<0.9%	Capital City Middle School, KIPP DC Northeast Academy PCS, Brookland MS, Kelly Miller MS, Howard University Middle School of Math and Science PCS, E L Haynes PCS Georgia Avenue, Two Rivers PCS, District of Columbia International School, School Without Walls at Francis Stevens, Jefferson Middle School Academy, McKinley Middle School, Washington Latin PCS MS, Meridian PCSD C Preparatory Edgewood Middle Campus PCS, Takoma EC, Friendship PCS Blow-Pierce Middle, Columbia Heights EC (CHEC), Center City Brightwood Campus PCS, Basis DC PCS, Cesar Chavez PCS Chavez Prep, Perry Street Prep PCS, Paul Public Charter School - Middle School, Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS, Washington Global, Truesdell EC, Wheatley EC, West EC, Whittier EC, Capitol Hill Montessori School at Logan, Eliot Hine MS, Johnson John Hayden MS, Sousa MS, Center City Capitol Hill Campus PCS, Center City Trinidad Campus PCS, Capital City High School PCS, Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts

#### School Without Walls

Number	%	School Name
592	100%	Total incoming students in school year 17-18
424	71.6%	School Without Walls HS
42	7.1%	<i>Not DCPS or charter</i>
34	5.7%	Deal MS
14	2.4%	Basis DC PCS
10	1.7%	Hardy MS
9	1.5%	Washington Latin PCS MS
9	1.5%	Two Rivers PCS
8	1.4%	Stuart Hobson MS (Capitol Hill Cluster)
7	1.2%	KIPP DC KEY Academy PCS
5	0.8%	Oyster Adams Bilingual School (Oyster)
N<5	<0.8%	DC Preparatory Edgewood Middle Campus PCS, KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS, Truesdell EC, School Without Walls at Francis Stevens, District of Columbia International School, Center City Petworth Campus PCS, Hope Community PCS Tolson Campus, KIPP DC AIM PCS Academy PCS, Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS Slowe Campus, Paul Public Charter School - Middle School, Capital City Middle School, Brightwood EC, Walker Jones EC, Benjamin Banneker HS, Kelly Miller MS, Columbia Heights EC (CHEC), McKinley Technology HS, Ellington School of the Arts, Washington Latin PCS HS

**McKinley Tech**

<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>School Name</b>
620	100%	Total incoming students in school year 17-18
418	67.4%	McKinley Technology HS
18	2.9%	McKinley Middle School
16	2.6%	<i>Not DCPS or charter</i>
13	2.1%	Howard University Middle School of Math and Science PCS
10	1.6%	Brookland MS
10	1.6%	Kelly Miller MS
9	1.5%	Stuart Hobson MS (Capitol Hill Cluster)
8	1.3%	Truesdell EC
7	1.1%	Meridian PCS
7	1.1%	Achievement Preparatory PCS-Middle School
6	1.0%	KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS
6	1.0%	LaSalle Backus EC
6	1.0%	Whittier EC
5	0.8%	Eliot Hine MS
5	0.8%	Center City Capitol Hill Campus PCS
N<5	<0.8%	Paul Public Charter School - Middle School, Walker Jones EC, Sousa MS, Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS Slowe Campus, D C Preparatory Edgewood Middle Campus PCS, William E. Doar Jr PCS, Brightwood EC, Hardy MS, Takoma EC, Jefferson Middle School Academy, Cesar Chavez PCS Chavez Prep, KIPP DC KEY Academy PCS, Two Rivers PCS, Washington Global, West EC, Friendship PCS Chamberlain Middle, School Without Walls at Francis Stevens, Hart MS, Ron Brown College Preparatory High School, Center City Shaw Campus PCS, Cesar Chavez Parkside MS PCS, Hope Community PCS Tolson Campus, Perry Street Prep PCS, School for Educational Evolution and Development (SEED) PCS, Capital City Middle School, Paul Public Charter School - International High School, KIPP DC Northeast Academy PCS, Washington Leadership Academy PCS, Raymond EC, Wheatley EC, Capitol Hill Montessori School at Logan, Friendship PCS Blow-Pierce Middle, Friendship PCS Woodridge Middle, Benjamin Banneker HS, Johnson John Hayden MS, Kramer MS, Columbia Heights EC (CHEC)Coolidge HS, Wilson HS, Dunbar HS, Center City Petworth Campus PCS, Excel Academy PCSKIPP DC College Prep PCS

**Banneker**

Number	%	School Name
482	100%	Total incoming students in school year 17-18
338	70%	Benjamin Banneker HS
15	3.1%	Deal MS
13	2.7%	Paul Public Charter School - Middle School
11	2.3%	Stuart Hobson MS (Capitol Hill Cluster)
7	1.5%	D C Preparatory Edgewood Middle Campus PCS
7	1.5%	Truesdell EC
7	1.5%	<i>Not DCPS or charter</i>
6	1.2%	Cesar Chavez PCS Chavez Prep
6	1.2%	Achievement Preparatory PCS-Middle School
5	1.0%	Howard University Middle School of Math and Science PCS
5	1.0%	Raymond EC
5	1.0%	Center City Brightwood Campus PCS
N<5	<1%	Brookland MS, Hope Community PCS Tolson Campus, KIPP DC AIM PCS Academy PCS, KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS, Hardy MS, Oyster Adams Bilingual School (Oyster), Capitol Hill Montessori School at Logan, Center City Shaw Campus PCS, Meridian PCS, Washington Global, Takoma EC, School Without Walls at Francis Stevens, Sousa MS, Jefferson Middle School Academy, Columbia Heights EC (CHEC), Cardozo EC, Ideal Academy PCS North Capitol Street Campus ESE L Haynes PCS Georgia Avenue, Perry Street Prep PCS, School for Educational Evolution and Development (SEED) PCS, Capital City Middle School, KIPP DC KEY Academy PCS, Two Rivers PCS, Brightwood EC, Paul Public Charter School - International High School, District of Columbia International School, Eliot Hine MS, Kelly Miller MS, McKinley Middle School, Center City Capitol Hill Campus PCS, Center City Congress Heights Campus PCS, Friendship PCS Tech Prep

I hope this information is useful to you in your ongoing efforts to improve public education in the District of Columbia. My staff and I would be happy to respond to any questions on these data.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Kathleen Patterson  
District of Columbia Auditor

cc: Councilmembers