



08:06:26 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: DC charter schools

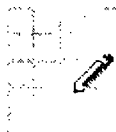
Here's a good sense of where we stand right now, except there's one significant change from when Jon wrote his note to Elena. Whereas Jon wrote that the House subcommittee had funded the charter schools at the expense of the public schools (notwithstanding a commitment by Taylor to rectify this situation in full committee), the Washington Times reported on Saturday that the subcommittee had funded charter schools out of federal dollars and did not take it out of public schools. If this is the case (and we are trying to get confirmation from both Martha and Carol), then we are in a good position in the House.

In addition, while Elena looked at Options 1-3 as most favorable or least objectionable, our (only Jon, Mike Cohen, and my) view was that Option 1 is the best option, although Option 2 is good as well if the Control Board would go for it. We just feel that we will encounter resistance to that option, but we only feel that way because Carol told us that.

Anyway, I think this gives you a good sense of where we are. Jon knows to call you if anything bubbles up today. We are looking to have a meeting tomorrow morning on this, unless a SAP needs to go soon because the DC approps will hit the Senate floor, in which case Jon will try to call a meeting today.

Thanks.

----- Forwarded by Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP on 07/27/98 08:06 AM -----



Jonathan H. Schnur
07/26/98 05:53:09 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: DC charter schools

----- Forwarded by Jonathan H. Schnur/OPD/EOP on 07/26/98 05:59 PM -----



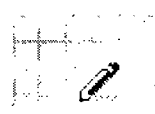
Elena Kagan
07/26/98 01:42:59 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jonathan H. Schnur/OPD/EOP @ EOP
cc: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
bcc:
Subject: Re: DC charter schools 

Thanks for this memo; it's very helpful. I agree with you on just about everything, and think only; options 1-3 make any sense. I'll drop an e-mail to jack making sure he knows of our interest in this subject and asking whether he has managed to get through to rivlin. is sounds as if we should probably have another meeting shortly.

Jonathan H. Schnur



Jonathan H. Schnur
07/24/98 11:12:48 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
cc: Michael Cohen/OPD/EOP, Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP
Subject: DC charter schools

Elena --

I wanted to give you an update on what has happened in the past 24 hours on DC charter schools.

House action in subcommittee today on the DC appropriations bill. The subcommittee mark fully funded charter schools -- increasing the charter school line item from \$12 million to \$32 million -- by cutting the same amount from the DC public school system. However, according to OMB, Congressman Moran spoke in the mark-up about the need to fully fund charter schools and the rest of the DC public school system. Congressman Taylor, the subcommittee chair, supposedly *agreed* to take this approach in the mark-up of the bill in full committee next Thursday. Taylor apparently said the additional funding would come out of the federal payment to DC -- a payment used for other purposes in the Senate but most of which Taylor had not planned to appropriate to DC at all. Moreover, Livingston also attended the mark-up and apparently made a supportive statement about this approach. This is obviously better news than expected, though I don't think we can't be certain that this agreement will hold -- particularly given that the Taylor's subcommittee took the wrong approach by cutting funds from the DC school system to fully fund the charter schools.

Rumors of Senate Action on the floor last night. Last night about 8:30 pm, we got word that the DC appropriations bill was possibly going to be brought to the floor of the Senate last night or this morning. OMB sent us a SAP to review including language on the charter school issue and a likely voucher amendment. Surprised that the bill was coming to the floor so quickly, Neera and I got a number of people on the line to assess the situation in the Senate on the bill and on the status of the charter school issue. In a conference call with OMB (Carol Thompson Cole, Janie Jeffers, and Roz Rettman) and eventually Control Board staff (Tim Leath), we discussed the charter school issue but soon learned that the bill was not going to the floor of the Senate until next week...probably later next week. Therefore, the SAP did not need to be sent last night, though it may need to be sent early next week.

Last night's conference call -- more information on the Control Board's and Senate's preliminary positions. Control Board staff indicated that the Board's efforts this week have been focused primarily on getting very broad authority to transfer funding from one portion of their budget to another -- an approach with many benefits to the Control Board, only one of which is making it possible to transfer funding into the charter school line item. The Senate apparently was -- not surprisingly -- reluctant to provide such broad transfer authority.

The control board staff also indicated that the Senate was considering two options for addressing the charter

school issue in a Manager's amendment to the appropriations bill. The first option was to take funding from the DC surplus to fully fund the charter schools. The second option was simply to direct the Control Board to fully fund charter schools. Under the second option -- unless further steps were taken in the House or in conference to provide the Control Board additional transfer authority -- the Control Board would be forced to increase funding for charter schools at the expense of other items in DC's education account. (This account includes the DC public school system, UDC, and libraries.)

When Control Board staff expressed to us concerns with both of these options, we outlined another option -- providing the Control Board specific authority to transfer funding from anywhere in the DC budget into the education account for charter schools. The staffer said he couldn't speak for the Control Board but that his recommendation to the Board would be that they *not* ask Senate staff to take this approach. He implied that Senate adoption of this option now could jeopardize the Board's attempts to secure broader transfer authority -- essentially, he implied that he didn't want to lose one of his strongest arguments for a broad transfer authority simply in order to fix the charter school issue now. He said it might be easier to support more specific transfer authority once the bill is in conference -- apparently if the Board has given up at that point on getting the broader authority. Finally, the staffer did say that he understood the need for the Control Board to publicly state its intention to fully fund charter schools.

OMB calls to Alice Rivlin. After the call, Mike Cohen, Neera and I spoke about next steps. Carol Thompson Cole had said she would call Alice Rivlin, but we agreed that a higher-level call to Rivlin was important. Melanne called Jack Lew this morning to ask him to call Alice Rivlin to ask for two things:

1) for the Control Board to support an alternative in the Senate that would make it possible to fully fund charter schools without taking the funding from the DC public school system -- by granting the Control Board specific authority to transfer funding from anywhere in the DC budget into the education account for charter schools. (We also could ask the Control Board if it could quietly tolerate cuts in other programs to fully fund the charter schools)

2) for the Control Board to make a public statement -- at the appropriate point in the near future -- about its desire to fully fund charter schools without taking funds away from the DC public school system.

I don't believe that Jack Lew and Alice Rivlin spoke today, but I have not been able to confirm that. I will let you know anything more as soon as I find out.

Next steps. Here's my best sense of next steps for Monday. What do you think?

1) Find out what the Control Board's position is on this. If Jack Lew does not speak to Alice Rivlin, I think we need to identify another way to do this quickly. Their position should affect the approach we take.

2) Convene another meeting to discuss the situation. Determine best option to pursue. *This clearly needs further discussion, but here's my best sense of possible options:* (I think option 1 is probably the most desirable. According to Control Board staff, options 2 and 4 are currently being considered by Senate staff. Option 5 seems to be the current Control Board strategy.)

OPTION 1 -- Support a Senate amendment granting the Board specific authority to transfer funding from anywhere in the DC budget into the education account in order to fully fund charter schools. This may make the most sense if A) the Control Board is willing to work with us to include this in the Senate bill and B) commit to using this authority to fully fund charter schools without significantly cutting the DC public school system. It may be hard to get the Senate to include this without Control Board support.

OPTION 2 -- Support a Senate amendment to take funding from the surplus in order to fully fund charter schools. This may make the most sense if the Control Board is unwilling to work with us, given problems with the following options. But OMB may well have serious concerns about this, given OMB's and the Control Board's past opposition to this.

OPTION 3 -- Identify cuts in other DC programs (outside of the education account) in order to fully fund charter schools, and get the Senate to include these recommendations in Senate amendment.

OPTION 4 -- Support Senate amendment directing Control Board to fully fund charter schools. Absent any new authority for the Control Board to allocate funds to charter schools from outside the education account, this would force the Control Board to support charter schools by cutting the DC public school system. Support for this approach doesn't seem to make sense -- given that the only way to fully fund charter schools and the DC

public school system under this approach would be to rely on getting the right transfer authority in conference.

OPTION 5 -- Do nothing in the Senate. (We could still encourage the House committee to honor the apparent commitments made today by Taylor and fully fund charter schools and the DC public school system -- taking money from the federal payment that had not been fully allocated in the subcommittee mark-up. Push for the House position or the right fix in conference. But it seems like a very risky strategy to rely on the House for DC appropriations issues.)

OPTION 6 -- Encourage the Senate to include language expressing an interest in fully funding all public schools -- including charter schools -- without a specific fix. This perhaps could help leave the door open to negotiations in conference.

3) Agree on language for a SAP that reflects our decision -- or that is general enough to cover the options that we are still considering.



Barbara Chow
07/24/98 06:44:27 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Katharine Button/WHO/EOP
cc: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP, Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP, Nicole R. Rabner/WHO/EOP
Subject: DC charter schools update

Katie, could you please print this out for Melanne? Thanks alot.

----- Forwarded by Barbara Chow/OMB/EOP on 07/24/98 06:42 PM -----



Mary I. Cassell

07/24/98 05:38:56 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Barbara Chow/OMB/EOP@EOP
cc: Sandra Yamin/OMB/EOP@EOP, Barry White/OMB/EOP@EOP, Wayne Upshaw/OMB/EOP@EOP
Subject: DC charter schools update

Here's an update on some of the DC charter schools issues:

House subcommittee mark and charter schools.

The subcommittee mark includes a \$21 million cut in DCPS and a comparable increase in charter schools (for a total of \$32 million). However, in the mark-up, Moran pushed Taylor, and Taylor agreed, to fully fund both charter schools and DCPS. Taylor said that the additional funds would come from the difference between the subcommittee mark and its 302b allocation (about \$85 million) and they would fix it in full committee next Thursday. (In addition to being below the 302b allocation, the mark is also below the President's budget because it does not fund the economic development corporation, transit funds related to the new convention center, and management reforms). I'm told that it is a bit odd but not unheard of (and certainly possible) to fund local functions in DC , such as education, with Federal funds. Regardless, Taylor made the statement and Livingston, who also attended the mark-up, made some sort of supportive statement as well.

Senate action.

DPC (Schnur), the First Lady's Office (Tanden), Janie Jeffers, Roz Rettman, Martha Foley, and Tim Leath had a conference call last night when they thought the DC bill might come to the Senate Floor today (it's back to next week now). In that call, Tim indicated that the Control Board was primarily interested in trying to get broad transfer authority (as opposed to being interested in fixing the charter school problem), but that such language would help them provide sufficient funds for charter schools. But, the Senate has apparently expressed the it is reluctant to provide broad transfer authority (since that would undermine Congress's control of the DC budget) and Rettman and Schnur think it is highly unlikely that the Senate will add it. Tim was asked whether the Control Board would support taking funds for charter schools out of the surplus. He said he didn't think the Control Board would like that , but would perhaps go along with it.

The options being pursued with the Senate are:

1) increasing the line item for charter schools with funds from the surplus (it may be possible to find funds from non-education sources in the DC budget, but I don't think the Control Board has been asked to seek such offsets); or

2) securing some kind of transfer authority -- perhaps something less broad and more directly related to charter schools -- coupled with a public commitment to provide the funds to charter schools. Roz has developed language for this more narrow transfer authority, but she doesn't think the Control Board is particularly interested in that, while Schnur says DPC (and I assume the other conference call participants) thinks that would be an acceptable option.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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June 22, 1998

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia
Committee on Appropriations
H-147 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor:

In preparation for the Subcommittee's upcoming mark-up of the District of Columbia's fiscal year 1999 Appropriations Act, I am writing to raise several issues with you relating to the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) section of the bill. I am hopeful that you will take these comments into consideration when you take up the bill later this week.

As you know, the consensus budget sent to Congress by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority would provide DCPS with \$545 million for FY99, while charter schools would receive about \$12 million for that period. It is my understanding that concerns have been raised by some in the charter school community that the amount of funding provided to them may be inadequate. Further, it has been suggested that some portion of DCPS' budget might be shifted to the charter school funding line to address the potential shortfall.

I am extremely concerned about this prospect, because I am convinced that all of the \$545 million provided for DCPS in the consensus budget is critically needed by the school system. In fact, the majority of this increase will be used to offset legally-mandated special education costs and other mandatory expenses. Only a small portion of the funds will be available to implement new education initiatives, including an increase in starting salaries for teachers, which will allow DCPS to attract and retain the most qualified new teachers, professional development for instructional staff, to support reforms in the classroom, and next year's summer school program.

I am pleased to report that the reform efforts already underway at DCPS have begun to bear fruit. Over the past year, we established clear standards for performance for both students and school staff and utilized a credible assessment tool to measure student achievement and progress accurately. In addition, we implemented new promotion guidelines to end the practice of passing students on from grade to grade even if they have not mastered necessary skills. School principals also are being held accountable for student success under a new performance evaluation system that bases fifty percent of a principal's rating on student achievement in his or her school. As a result of these reform measures, we saw solid increases in student performance on the standardized tests administered this spring.

In addition, we have undertaken a large-scale summer school program, called Summer STARS, through which over 20,000 DCPS students are receiving help with basic skills. Participation in the program, which is focused on reading and math, was a requirement for promotion for students with low test scores; many others chose to attend (or their parents chose to enroll them) in order to strengthen these essential skills. I believe this high level of participation in Summer STARS will produce additional gains in the district's test scores; as importantly, I believe it reflects a new confidence among DCPS parents and students that the school system will provide quality educational services to them.

Children First

I therefore urge the Subcommittee not to reduce DCPS' budget for FY99. Should the charter schools require additional funding, I am hopeful that you will either identify another source for that funding or allow the Financial Authority to address the issue if and when charter enrollment levels merit an increase in their funding level.

On a related front, I am aware that several amendments to the DC School Reform Act have been proposed and I would like to take this opportunity to provide my thoughts on them.

Sibling Preference

DCPS recognizes that parents may wish to enroll more than one of their children in a new charter school and that the current lottery system does not facilitate such an arrangement. We have no objection to an amendment providing a preference for siblings in new charter schools, similar to the preference that already is allowed for conversion schools.

Extended Authorization

DCPS is opposed to permanent reauthorization of the DC School Reform Act in your FY99 bill. Numerous concerns have been raised in recent months regarding charter school oversight and this issue and others should be addressed during the reauthorization process. In addition, an evaluation of the program's effectiveness should be conducted prior to reauthorization. Since the act does not expire until April 2001, there is plenty of time for such a process to be undertaken. Additional years of authority are not needed now.

Restoration of Initial September Payment

DCPS would support reinstitution of the initial September payment for new charter schools, as long as the proposed language is amended to eliminate references to an open-ended authorization of the program. Further, the language should be modified to make clear, as did the original bill, that only new charter schools operating in the coming fiscal year are eligible for funds.

Accountability

DCPS supports the inclusion of language allowing for the recovery of public funds and assets upon non-renewal or revocation of a school's charter. However, we do not believe that these assets should revert to the chartering authorities, which do not presently "own" assets or funds. It may be more appropriate for such assets to revert to the DC Chief Financial Officer, who currently is responsible for receipt and disbursement of all charter school funds.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact me directly, or have a member of your staff contact Ms. Karen Bates, DCPS' Legislative Liaison, at 724-3722, if you require additional information on any of the issues discussed above.

Respectfully,



Arlene Ackerman
Superintendent

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

STATEMENT OF JOSEPHINE C. BAKER
CHAIRPERSON
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 24, 1998

Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee and distinguished colleagues. I am Josephine Baker, Chairperson of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board. I am delighted to have been asked to testify on behalf of public charter schools this morning.

During my testimony today, I will cover four topics:

- (1) the Fiscal Year 1999 budget request for public charter schools in the District of Columbia;
- (2) the Fiscal Year 1999 budget request for the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board's operations;
- (3) recommendations for possible changes in the District of Columbia School Reform Act; and
- (4) a summary of what the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board has accomplished over the past year, particularly in the area of accountability.

◆ **THE FISCAL YEAR 1999 BUDGET REQUEST FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.**

The fiscal year 1999 District of Columbia budget request of \$12,235,000 for public charter schools falls far short of what is needed to support the numbers of students who will be enrolled in public charter schools when public schools open in the fall of 1998. At a base rate of \$5,500 per student (with no allowances made for grade levels or students with special needs requiring higher funding levels), the amount requested will support only 2, 225 students.

As of March of this year, the DC Public Charter School Board awarded ten charters. Eight of these newly chartered public schools will open in September 1998. We anticipate that 2,275 students will attend these eight

schools. If you add this number to the number of students who will be enrolled in the eleven schools chartered by the DC Board of Education that plan to open in September 1998, the problem becomes frighteningly clear.

All of us have promised alternatives to the families and students in Washington and we have raised hopes and expectations among communities. We look to the Congress to ensure that promises are kept and that public charter schools are fully funded.

THE FISCAL YEAR 1999 BUDGET REQUEST FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONS.

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board is requesting an increase of \$80,000 in its appropriated funds for fiscal year 1999, from \$400,000 to \$480,000. The additional funds are needed to cover staff costs as we enter our first year with operating schools and anticipate awarding up to ten new charters in the fall of this year.

The work of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board is labor intensive and focuses on four key areas: a rigorous **application review and selection** process, (2) **accountability** planning and implementation that aims toward capacity building among the schools, (3) **monitoring** the schools we chartered this year and providing technical assistance where it is needed; and (4) **community outreach** to increase understanding of public charter schools and the role they play in improving public education. The Board is in the final stage of selecting an Executive Director whom we expect to join us in August and we hope to have at least two more staff in place by this fall.

◆ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SCHOOL REFORM ACT.

We have learned much during the past fifteen months about the District of Columbia School Reform Act and how to work within the framework it provides. However, there are two provisions of that law that, if changed, would better support efforts to charter schools that will be successful.

1. The law requires that public charter schools admit students using a **random selection** process when more students apply than there are spaces available. Recently, the Board was approached by one of the newly chartered schools because twins had applied and since the school had more applicants than spaces, a lottery was being held. The question was, "what can we do, if as a result of the lottery, one twin is admitted and the other isn't?" What about siblings? The way the law is written, it makes it too difficult for parents who have to worry about getting their children to and from school. As the law is written, parents could face

the difficulty of transporting their children to different schools or the unpleasant option of not enrolling in the public charter school the child whose name was drawn in the lottery.

The law should be changed to make it more family friendly. The random selection provision for new public charter schools should give preference to siblings just as that preference is given for existing public or private schools that convert to public charter school status.

2. The **authorization of the DC School Reform Act** should be extended beyond the current April 2001 expiration date. Under the law now, charter schools are granted fifteen-year charters with a provision that the Authority granting the charter review the charter at least once every five years to determine if the charter should be revoked. Stability and consistency in governance and oversight are critical to the success of any new venture, especially one that makes the kind of break from tradition that public charter schools do. It is imperative that the structure and direction provided by the DC School Reform Act remain in place for enough time (10 years) to permit real change to occur and take hold.

♦ **A SUMMARY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF ACCOUNTABILITY.**

It's difficult for members of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board to believe that the Board has existed for fewer than sixteen months. We've worked hard and we've accomplished much in that period of time.

As a Board, we have been consistent in our determination to ensure that attention to accountability is evident in the operations of the schools we charter and in our own work. The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board operates under two imperatives that influence every aspect of its work. First, the Board seeks to help improve public education for children, youth, and adults in the District of Columbia by chartering public schools that succeed. Second, the Board works tirelessly to help the schools it charters meet the highest standards of accountability.

Accordingly, we have focused our resources over the past fifteen months on building and strengthening what we believe to be the four pillars of charter school quality and accountability.

First, the board created and managed a carefully designed and rigorous **application review and decision process** to be sure that the applicants approved for a charter offer an exceptionally strong educational program and have a high probability of success. This review process uses technical

reviewers with expertise and experience in important areas such as curriculum, business and financial management, school governance and operations, and parent and community involvement. These reviewers read and rate applications and conduct face-to-face interviews of each applicant. Their reports are a valuable component of the Board's decision-making process. The ten new public charter schools approved this year from a field of 26 applicants are all extremely promising and offer new opportunities for students in the nation's capital.

Second, the board is developing comprehensive and legally sound **charter agreements** that are individually tailored to each school's structure, mission, goals, and educational program.

Third, the Board is working in partnership with our 10 new charter schools, providing them with guidance and technical help in the development and implementation of **school-based accountability procedures** that will enable them to —

- (1) set challenging but achievable goals;
- (2) track their progress toward their goals;
- (3) make program adjustments when needed; and
- (4) report to parents, the community, and the Board on their performance and progress.

The Board has been told that this front-end approach to building school-based accountability has not been done before and that we are creating a model for charter schools across the country.

Fourth, the Board is completing its own procedures for **monitoring** each school's progress in meeting its goals and academic achievement expectations, fiscal management, and compliance with applicable law and the terms of its charter.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today. I will be happy to provide more information about the schools the Board has chartered and our partnerships with the schools to ensure success and accountability.

Attachment: Ensuring the Accountability of Public Charter Schools in the District of Columbia

FY 1999 District of Columbia Per-Pupil Funding Formula
for Public Charter Schools and the D.C. Public Schools
(as passed by the City Council)

Grade Level	Per-Pupil Amount
Pre-School & Pre-Kindergarten	\$6,380
Grades K-5	\$5,775
Grades 6-8	\$5,500
Grades 9-12	\$6,600
Adult Education	\$4,125
Program	Supplemental Per-Pupil Amount
Level 1 Special Education	\$1,210
Level 2 Special Education	\$4,400
Level 3 Special Education	\$9,515
Level 4 Special Education	\$9,460
Limited English Proficient	\$2,200
Summer School	\$550
Residential	\$9,350
Facility Allowance	\$617

**The US Department of Education's Proposed Plan
to Assist the District of Columbia's Public Charter Schools Program
over the next Two Months**

#1: Help Develop a Memorandum of Understanding or Other like Document Outlining the Authority, Roles, Responsibilities of the Superintendent, SEA/ the Chief State School Officer (CSSO) and the Chartering Authorities in the District of Columbia

- **July 10, 1998**

Completion of preliminary analysis of District and Federal laws/provisions that outline the roles and responsibilities of the key parties within the context of these laws.

- **July 13, 1998**

Held meeting with Superintendent Ackerman and Deputy Secretary Mike Smith to discuss the findings on authority, roles and responsibilities of the Superintendent, the CSSO and the chartering authorities.

Note: The above discussion highlighted the need for further research and clarification of roles and responsibilities. In addition, due to the issues needing further research and clarification, Superintendent Ackerman requested another meeting with the Deputy Secretary prior to convening the meeting with experts and the chartering authorities.

- **July 20- 21, 1998--(Complete follow-up work on issues raised on July 13)**

Develop various examples, using fact patterns which illustrate responsibilities and accountability issues.

Conduct further research on how District laws affect the following:

- The requirement to educate disabled students.
- The responsibilities/authority provided to the CSSO/ state education agency (SEA).

Draft proposed criteria to be used by the Superintendent who is required to review charter school applications for "technical sufficiency and completeness." These criteria for example could include:

- A determination of whether an application demonstrates the capacity to function as an independent local education agency (LEA).
- A determination of whether an application demonstrates the capacity to educate children.

Complete collection of information on MOUs from other states which have either single LEAs or have state charter school laws that might be detailed enough to help identify roles and responsibilities of the key parties.

- **July 23 or 30, 1998**

Meet with Superintendent Ackerman and the Deputy Secretary to continue discussion of roles, responsibilities and authority.

- **July 31, 1998**

Host first MOU meeting with experts, the chartering boards and Superintendent Ackerman to discuss roles, responsibilities and authority of the key parties involved.

- **August 1998 and beyond**

Follow-up meetings will be scheduled, as necessary.

(Note: Proposed dates are contingent upon the schedules of the key parties involved. The Department also will continue to coordinate its work with attorneys who are expert in DC laws including the General Counsel for the DC public schools , the Control Board and the Corporation Council.)

#2: Technical Assistance Forums for All Parties Involved with the Charter School Program in DC including New 1998 Charter Schools

- **By End of July 1998**

Host a meeting to inform charter school sponsors, administrators, etc. of Federal resources available to them. This will focus primarily on the recent Obey Porter and Comprehensive School Reform legislation and application requirements for funding. This is a follow-up on a June 12, 1998 forum hosted jointly by the Department and the DC Public Schools for DC charter school sponsors, operators, administrators, and the chartering authorities, etc. on how to access federal funds.

- **July 1998 --only if absolutely required -- the proposed alternative is August 1998**

The Department will host a day-long forum of charter school experts on promising practices to be offered preferably in August 1998. We are designing the forum expressly to meet the needs of the charter authorities and charter schools. We already have contacted most of the charter schools that were approved by the Elected School Board. Three main areas of need were identified

- Accountability
 - Funding
 - Facilities, including Individual Occupancy Permits
 - The obligations and promising strategies for chartering authorities to with charter schools that are in trouble.
- Other topics could include:
 - The responsibilities of LEAs including responsibilities to disabled students.

#3: Further Assistance ^{to} with the DC Public Schools' Charter School Liaison Office with Allocation of Funding for Charter Schools

- By End of July 1998

Create a Task Force with representatives from the DC Public Schools' Charter School Liaison Office. On July 13, 1998, Deputy Secretary Smith and Superintendent Ackerman asked for the creation of a task force to identify the best and fairest way to allocate Federal funds to charter schools. For example, some statutes, such as Title I, have concentration grants (i.e., extra funding for LEAs with high numbers of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunches). Other statutes require a minimum number of students to be eligible for federal funds. These will be identified and assistance will be provided to ensure DC is appropriately allocating Federal resources.

July 15, 1998



11:19:07 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP, Katharine Button/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: charter school article

Charter Schools Strive to Get Ready

By Valerie Strauss and Jay Mathews
Washington Post Staff Writers
Monday, July 13, 1998; Page B01

Less than two months before classes begin, more than half of the 16 new D.C. public charter schools planning to open their doors this fall are still struggling to nail down building leases, renovate classrooms and recruit students -- and some may have to scramble to find temporary locations.

In addition, charter school activists say they need to ask local and federal officials for as much as \$18 million more in funds for the charter school programs because the \$12.2 million requested by D.C. officials is not nearly sufficient.

Charter school directors say D.C. officials are having trouble fitting the new schools into existing city regulations. One charter school director encountered a city official who insisted that the building the director was calling from did not exist. Some city school officials, directors say, have been slow to respond to requests for help because they are worried that charter schools will lure energetic students and parents from the regular public school system.

"The fear brings a lot of confusion, and bureaucratic things take too long," said Virginia F. Walden, director of community outreach for Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS), a pro-charter group.

Charter schools are public schools that operate with public money but are independent from the central school administration. Supporters say they will offer parents a choice in public education and force traditional schools to improve to avoid losing students. Opponents say that charter schools will drain the most involved parents and most motivated students from the regular system. They also warn that such schools sometimes falter because they do not have to account carefully enough for their spending and teaching decisions.

The D.C. charter school law is one of the most liberal in the nation, allowing as many as 20 additional schools each year to be chartered by one of two panels -- the elected Board of Education or the congressionally mandated D.C. Public Charter School Board.

At the current rate of growth of charter schools, it may not take long for

them to rival the 146 traditional public schools. Three schools that were chartered in 1996 will operate again this year -- though a fourth, the Marcus Garvey Public Charter School, lost its charter after the director and some members of her staff were convicted of assaulting a newspaper reporter.

Malcolm Peabody, head of FOCUS, said that of the 16 charter schools planning to open this fall, nine "still make me nervous" because of such obstacles as unsigned leases and incomplete site renovations. Dorothy Goodman, founder of the World Public Charter School, which will prepare students for the high-level International Baccalaureate degree, said that she is still waiting for the D.C. financial control board to approve her lease for the Military Road School and that she repeatedly has been stymied in efforts to lease other unused D.C. schools.

Many charter school founders are scrambling to negotiate terms of leases, hire teachers and recruit students by the Sept. 8 start of school.

Norman Johnson, who is opening the IDEA Public Charter School for high school students who want a career in electronics, engineering design or drafting, is aiming to open with 150 students. He said he currently has 110 -- all but one of them drawn from D.C. public schools. One student from Maryland will be required to pay tuition.

Johnson will share space with three other schools in the Waterside Mall in Southwest Washington. He said he is still wrangling with General Services Administration officials to secure a final lease agreement.

But "we're going to open -- even if we have to open in my basement," Johnson said.

Irasema Salcido, founder of the Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter High School, is also leasing space in Waterside Mall. She said she doesn't know whether the site will be ready or whether she will have to find a temporary location for the 60 ninth-graders she has recruited.

Linda Moore, executive director of the Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School, said she had been spending every Friday in long lines at the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. She said one official there told her the building she was planning to use for her school did not exist. It turned out he was looking at a file with an old address while she had the new, correct one.

Moore now has a professional expeditor handling the paperwork, but she still lacks a certificate of occupancy and a building permit for renovations to her classrooms in the basement of St. Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church.

Charter school students are currently funded under a formula that allocates, with some variations, about \$5,500 per student, according to Peabody. Under the D.C. charter law, the schools receive 75 percent of their funding in the fall, and the rest, based on their enrollment, in the spring.

Peabody said he thinks the charter school movement is so popular with Congress that the extra \$18 million will be provided, particularly since the original budget assumed an enrollment of 2,000 students when 4,000 are expected to attend.

Jim Ford, who works with Boston-based Advantage Schools to help open charter schools, said it is impossible to figure out exactly how much money the schools actually will need until they open and enrollment counts are completed.

"The worry is, what happens if the schools open up and the total appropriation is not close to being sufficient?" Ford said. "Do all schools take a cut in their revenues, which could affect the operations enough to jeopardize some schools? Or is there a reasonable way to identify additional dollars quickly?"

D.C. public school officials admit they are concerned about the growth of charter schools in the city and fear that the costs of funding them will cut into their own budget. Donald Rickford, chief financial officer for the public schools, said it is still unclear where the extra money will come from. He worries that authorities will take it out of the local schools' budget -- already so tight that Superintendent Arlene Ackerman is scaling back some reform plans for next year.

Maudine R. Cooper, who heads the appointed emergency board of trustees for the schools, said she supports the charter movement. "But if one of these schools has a problem, and the kids come back to us, the money is already spent," she said.



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Office of the Superintendent

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① P. Letter
② Jan / Nicole / Neera

June 9, 1998

The First Lady
Office of Correspondence, Room 18
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for your efforts on behalf of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). By providing over \$5 million in federal funds to help support DCPS' summer school program ("Summer STARS"), you have demonstrated the depth of your commitment to improving public education in the nation's capital. I am deeply grateful for your leadership and support.

I want you to know that your investment in our school reform effort is a solid one. At DCPS, we are implementing high standards for student achievement, and we are taking the necessary steps to help our students reach those standards. We are providing students with the support they need to achieve -- including before-school and after-school tutoring, "Saturday Academies," and our new, highly-focused Summer STARS program. We are providing professional development for our teachers and principals to ensure that they have the skills and tools to help their students succeed, and we are revising performance evaluations in the schools and in central administration to create a singular focus on student achievement. We are communicating with parents, members of the business community, religious leaders and others about the critical role they must play in this effort. Finally, we are ending the practice of "social promotion." I have enclosed materials on several of these initiatives for your information, and I would be happy to discuss any of these key aspects of our reform effort in more detail with you or a member of your staff.

I hope you will join me in visiting one of the approximately 80 Summer STARS sites this summer, so that you can see the results of the administration's contribution first hand. Thank you, again, for your commitment to making the District of Columbia's public schools the national model they can and should be.

Respectfully,

Arlene Ackerman

Arlene Ackerman
Superintendent

Enclosures

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH SUPERINTENDENT ACKERMAN

June 22, 1998

Superintendent Ackerman is the chief executive officer and principal decision maker in the D.C. Public School structure. Superintendent Ackerman's goal is to create an exemplary school system for all students, one where they will receive the education they need for college, for good jobs and for life in the 21st Century. Specifically, Ackerman plans to focus on higher test scores; better-maintained facilities; more effective teaching; an increase in satisfaction among parents, staff and students; better customer services; and more resources to the schools.

Support for Superintendent Ackerman's Current Strategy and Performance

- I recognize that you are facing significant challenges. The D.C. school system faces a convoluted governance structure and lagging academic performance. [The D.C. Public school system has the lowest average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress of any school system in the nation.]
- I know that fixing a school system is not a one-person show. Turning this school system around will require the efforts of many well-qualified and motivated administrators and teachers, high performance standards for educators and students alike, parental responsibility and support, and additional resources to get the job done.
- Both the President and I have long been supporters of public education, and we are particularly supportive of your efforts to turn the D.C. Public School system around.
- I have heard from Secretary Riley and Mike Smith that you are doing great things. The new year is filled with promise, hope, and high expectations. I have been particularly interested in your focus on accountability and improving the achievement of all students, as well as your efforts to end social promotion and create high academic standards.
- And I understand you've already seen some success -- I know the District's public school test results are moving in the right direction. We hope and expect that the reforms you are instituting will result in even more measurable improvements.

Charter Schools in the DC Public School System

- As you know, in response to the D.C. schools' problems Congress began calling for dramatic changes in education, including giving poor children vouchers to attend private schools, as part of the "D.C. Student Opportunity Scholarship Act."
- While we agree with many of the goals of voucher programs, such as expanding educational choice, fostering competition, and increasing parental involvement, we know vouchers will leave the vast majority of students behind. Vouchers drain precious resources, and can thereby hinder the public schools' attempts to improve performance.

- Although the recent voucher bill in Congress was vetoed, we anticipate that the battle will become increasingly more difficult. Charter schools can meet many of the goals of voucher systems, such as promoting choice and competition, but they do so within the public schools.
- I wanted to talk with you today about your views about charter schools. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Charter School Program? What problems, if any, do you anticipate? How can we ensure that charter schools will work?

**BRIEF ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Education Reform Efforts in the District of Columbia

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

In the Fall of 1996, the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (the Control Board), created by Congress in 1995 to oversee municipal spending and operations, declared a state of emergency in the DC public schools (DCPS). Retired Army General Julius W. Becton, Jr. became the new Superintendent in November 1996. In April 1998, he resigned sooner than originally planned amid growing criticism of his 17-month tenure. Almost immediately, the Control Board named newly-arrived Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer, Arlene Ackerman, as his successor. Superintendent Ackerman had previously served as Deputy Superintendent in Seattle. She had been hired in September 1997 with the expectation that she would assume the Superintendent's position in June 2000, when General Becton's term ended.

Superintendent Ackerman is now the chief decision maker for the DC public schools. She has said that accountability will be the hallmark of her administration. She is saddled, however, with an unforgivably convoluted governance structure. The players and their roles in the school system include:

The United States Congress: With constitutional authority over the district, it has final say over the school budget.

The District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority: This five member panel appointed by the President has broad powers over the city's public schools.

The District of Columbia Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees: This nine member, unpaid board of trustees, created in April 1996 by the control board, oversees the day-to-day operations of the school system. It will expire in June 2000 unless the control board prolongs its life. In January 1998, a federal court ruled that the Control Board had exceeded its authority in delegating its power to the Trustees. The court ruled that Congress had intended that the Control Board manage the schools directly, and that it could not cede that authority to another body. The Control Board responded by declaring that the Trustees would act as its "agent" in overseeing the school system, and that the Trustees' decisions would take effect unless rejected by the Control Board. The Chairman of the Trustees, Bruce MacLaury, resigned in April 1998 and has been replaced by Maudine Cooper, who heads the Washington Urban League.

The City Council and the Mayor: Under the law that created the Control Board, these municipal officials can veto line items in the school budget before it is submitted to the control board; however, the control board can overrule them.

The District of Columbia Board of Education: Although the DC Board of Education retained its authority as a chartering agency for DC public charter schools, the Control Board temporarily stripped this elected 11-member body of its other powers, making it an advisory board. Under the new governing structure, the Board of Education can review and make recommendations on a wide variety of educational issues but has no binding authority.

PROCUREMENT AND FINANCIAL TROUBLES

The Control Board decided to significantly increase the school system's local budget from an initial \$460 million to about \$581 million for FY99, a proposal which was challenged by some officials questioning whether the system can spend the additional funds effectively.

You should note that in April 1998, the Control Board announced that the school system would have to layoff employees in order to close a projected FY 1998 operating deficit of \$62 million. Although the city government will contribute approximately half the funds needed, in order to help close the deficit the Superintendent has been laying off several hundred administrators and other non-instructional staff now amounting to over 500 people.

IMPROVING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN

Standards and Accountability for Students

Improving academic achievement for all children is Superintendent Ackerman's number one goal. New challenging academic standards have been put in place. During the 1997-98 school year, the district implemented new content standards in reading/language arts and math. The standards are aligned with national standards in these subject areas, and the Stanford-9 was selected because it is aligned with these standards. New content standards in science, social studies, art, health, and world languages are being phased in gradually. More than 250 teachers have undergone training to help them translate the standards into effective instructional strategies.

Research-Based Reform Models

Outside experts are currently providing the 23 most needy elementary schools -- schools with students performing far below the expected level of achievement -- additional help with extra one-on-one tutoring and with carrying out innovative research-based intervention strategies. These 23 schools are using three different models, the first of which has been supported by Department research funds:

- Temple University's model: Community for Learning/Whole-School Reform model (in 6 schools)
- Johns Hopkins University's: Success for All model (in 8 schools)
- National Institutes of Health research project--Early Intervention for Children with Reading Problems (in 9 schools)

Superintendent Ackerman hopes to expand the use of comprehensive whole-school reform models. The Administration's FY 99 budget includes a request for \$20 million, in part, to fund this reform.

Curbing Social Promotions

Superintendent Ackerman has placed a high priority on eliminating social promotions. The school system will rely heavily, but not exclusively, on the district's new achievement test, the Stanford-9, and additional indicators of student performance to determine whether or not a student is retained in grade. According to guidelines issued, students who score below 75 percent of the basic level in both reading and math on the Stanford-9 should be retained. Students who are retained will have access to supplementary assistance, including before- and after-school tutoring, the district's expanded summer school program, and assistance from reading resource teachers during the following school year.

Additional Learning Opportunities for Students

Summer STARS

Superintendent Ackerman has instituted Summer STARS (Students and Teachers Achieving Results and Success), a massive, six-week summer school program open to all DCPS students, but primarily to provide additional learning opportunities for students who perform poorly on the Stanford-9. (See, Attachment A - Spring 1997 and 1998 test scores.) The Summer STARS program will run every day of the week from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm. The curriculum consists of two hours of reading and two hours of math instruction in classrooms with just 15 students. Every Friday afternoon, the program will provide enrichment activities for all students, including trips to the Smithsonian Museums and parks. In this its first year, the district expects 20,000 students to attend Summer STARS.

The Administration has provided unprecedented additional financial support to the DC school system. Recently, we provided them \$5 million to help fund the Summer STARS program this summer. Families do not have to pay to enroll their children in the summer program.

Support During the School Year

Students in every elementary classroom are learning literacy skills for at least 90 minutes a day and math for at least 60 minutes. The vast majority of schools have also established Saturday Academies and before-and-after school programs for students needing extra help. The Everybody Reads literacy campaign is recruiting adults from throughout the city to tutor second-graders in reading and is working closely with other tutoring programs such as Everybody Wins and DC Reads, a literacy program modeled after the Administration's America Reads Challenge.

Accountability

New, more detailed report cards are being piloted for elementary school students which include input from teachers, principals and parents to help show which academic standards each student has met and which areas need work. Additionally, school-by-school report cards are being developed to include information on student achievement, student attendance, secondary school dropout rates, staff, parent and student satisfaction, school leadership and market share. Schools will be measured against the District's standards and their own performance.

Plans are for evaluations of principals and the superintendent to be based on student achievement. Superintendent Ackerman has started a new process to evaluate principals. Under the district's new accountability system, all principals work under one-year contracts. The superintendent plans to evaluate their performance based on several factors, with student achievement on the Stanford-9 being of greatest importance. Evaluations will be based on the following: academic performance, school climate, parent and community involvement, human resources management, fiscal resource management and leadership. These will be an early indication of whether Superintendent Ackerman will fulfill her promise to remove the poor-performing principals.

Annual evaluations of the superintendent are also linked to student achievement. A new teacher evaluation system, which the district hopes to have in place by the 1998-99 school year, will also be based largely on improved student achievement.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Mills court order requires that the DC school system act within 50 days to evaluate and place students who are in need of special education. This order requires a much faster response than the current national average of 120 days. Although special education students represent approximately 10% of DCPS' enrollment, the costs of special education and related services constitute approximately 20% of DCPS' local budget.

DCPS lacks sufficient numbers of personnel and available programs to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Some students are sent to distant states (as far away as Vermont and California) to participate in programs at a cost that exceeds \$100,000 a year per child. Thousands of DC students in need of special education services do not get these services in as timely a manner as mandated by the Mills court order. Thousands of students have been referred for special education but awaited completion of an initial assessment, while thousands of other students with disabilities will not have been re-evaluated for more than 36 months following their initial or most previous reevaluation. Once students are evaluated, DCPS is not providing related services in accordance with students' IEPs. Once hearing decisions are issued, they are not being fully implemented within the time frame set out by the hearing determination.

FACILITIES

In 1994, Parents United for DC Public Schools, an education advocacy group, filed a law suit over fire code violations. While the problem of crumbling school buildings has not yet been solved, the facilities issue is no longer complicated by involvement with the judicial system. Last November, the law suit was settled.

Prior to his departure, General Becton entered into an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to oversee DCPS' facilities improvement program. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governs facility assessment, renovation, restoration, and operation and maintenance of facilities.

The Army expressed overall satisfaction with the partnership, with the exception that it would like the authority to treat DC Public Schools in the same way it treats any other federal entity so that it can manage the contracting through the entire process, and that it would like direct funding from Congress for its work for DC Public Schools.

The Army is establishing its priorities with two immediate goals in mind: to assure that projects which must be completed before the start of summer school are completed, and that the opening of school in the fall is not affected by the construction/ repair projects. During the 1997-98 school year, DC Public Schools operated 146 school buildings. The Army is also helping develop DCPS' long-range facilities master plan, taking into account both the academic program and the long-range demographic projections.

A Congressional/Federal Workgroup headed by Senator Jeffords is trying to come up with a way to cover the significant costs of the program. Jack Lew is the Administration's representative on the workgroup.

CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

In April 1996, Congress authorized charter schools in DC and in August the DC Board of Education approved five schools. Three were operating during the 1997-98 school year.

DC is projected to have eighteen new charter schools by September 1998. In the 1997-98 school year, 250 students were enrolled in charter schools, while in the 1998-99 school year, approximately 5,000 students are expected to enroll in charter schools.

Like other states, DC has multiple chartering boards: the DC Public Charter School Board and the Elected School Board / Board of Education. The boards' responsibilities include reviewing applications to develop public charter schools; establishing criteria for evaluating charter school applications; awarding or denying requests for new charters; providing technical assistance; monitoring the operations of public charter schools, as well as the progress of students in those schools; and renewing or revoking charters of schools. At present, each board has the authority

to charter 10 new schools each year.

Lack of Uniformity in the Selection Criteria and Review Procedures

A discrepancy currently exists between the number of charters approved by the DC Public Charter School Board (10 of the 26 applications) and those approved by the Board of Education (all nine of their applicants were approved). This implies a disparity between the selection criteria and review procedures of the two boards.

Funding to Support Chartering Boards and Charter Schools

The two boards differ in the financial support they receive. To perform mandated functions, the DC Charter School Board received funds from Congress, while the Board of Education receives its funding from the Emergency Trustees. The two boards recently began to host joint activities to support public charter schools in selected areas and to share information about DC Public School resources. Recently DC Public Schools and the U.S. Department of Education also jointly hosted a conference to inform prospective and current charter school representatives about their eligibility for funding and how to gain access to these funds.

As a general rule, public charter schools are entitled to the same federal financial assistance as traditional public schools. Charter schools in DC, particularly first-year charter schools, may not have access to the same resources as the traditional public schools when funding decisions are based on prior-year student enrollment figures. Regarding city financed support for charter schools, a per-pupil funding formula was approved by the DC Council. This is the same per-pupil funding formula that is used to fund students in the traditional public school system. However, charter schools do not have equal access to DCPS' facilities since currently all buildings are under the control of the DC Public Schools which set policies under which charter schools can access facilities through purchase, lease or other arrangements.

Proliferation of DC Charter Schools and Potential for Inequity

Concern has been raised about the potential consequences of the creation of 20 new charter schools in DC each year. The burgeoning number of charter schools could result in a depletion of already limited resources or the removal of the top students and resources from currently existing public schools. Additionally, as the number of schools increase, chartering authorities may not have the resources to adequately monitor schools.

Others indicate the positive results of increased school choice, although the DC Public Schools currently do not have a systematic way of disseminating information to parents about DC public charter schools and programs they provide. Without a system in place to make this information equally available to all, DC charter schools will not be truly accessible and viable alternatives in public school choice.

Concerns Regarding Superintendents' Authority Over Charter Schools:

- In general, chief state school officers do not have strong authority over charter schools. Charter granting and revocation decisions are made by local school boards, not by superintendents, with the exception of New Jersey.
- No state currently has a provision for giving the superintendent authority to review the other entities' charter granting criteria and procedures.
- Chief state school officers in support of charter schools work with the media and with the districts to build support for the charter schools, and they ensure that their charter school offices have the support and resources to get the job done.

Potential Legislative and Other Actions to Support DC Charter Schools

- To respond to the lack of uniformity in selection criteria and review procedures, legislative initiatives could be proposed to mandate standardized criteria and the appointment of a clear, single authority to ensure equity in review of charter school petitions and other actions.
- To respond to the issue of possible access inequality, a piece of legislation could be proposed that would place responsibility for dissemination of information in one entity.
- Superintendent Ackerman could take steps to advocate for charters and ensure that there is adequate DCPS staff working in support of charter schools.

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S
DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS INITIATIVE
May 1998 - Status Report**

The Department's DC Public Schools Initiative is intended to help the District's public school system implements **system-wide and school-based academic and management reforms** to improve the quality of education through, providing resources and sharing expertise in such areas as curriculum and instruction, assessment, accountability, education research, school governance, education technology, adult education, and parent and community involvement.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- The Department makes available, on a continuing basis, information on promising approaches, research-based ideas, and guidance to DCPS to assist it in addressing the system-wide challenges it faces.
- The Department is working closely with the new Superintendent as she focuses on improving student achievement and failing schools. To accelerate academic reform, the Department recently granted DCPS \$5 million in FY 1998 funds from the Fund for the Improvement of Education and has requested another \$20 million for FY 1999. These funds will be used to provide academically intensive summer programs primarily for students performing below the basic level in reading and mathematics on the Stanford Achievement Test, help fund reading specialists in every school to improve student literacy skills, provide professional development for teachers and principals, and implement comprehensive whole-school reform, with an emphasis on turning around failing schools.
- The Department is providing assistance to the new Superintendent by helping to develop an Entry Plan for her as she assumes the Superintendency. A small number of successful urban superintendents will be selected from around the nation to advise her. The Department will help put a Transition Team in place, which will assist in critical positions within the system, identify areas for reform, and shape a reform strategy.
- The Department continues to work to ensure that all education programs are effective and that Federal (and local) funds are spent in ways that are faithful to Federal laws while strengthening the system's reform efforts and its ability to effectively participate in Federal grant programs.

The Department recommended that DCPS hire independent auditors to conduct an internal controlled self-assessment and provide recommendations on fixing the central administrative systems, including procurement, personnel, payroll and accounting. A final report on an implementation plan and Federal grants procedures for DCPS was recently completed and the Department is now considering subsequent actions. At the same time, the District is moving toward centralizing Personnel, Financial Management Systems, Information Technology, and Procurement, and the Department is helping both DCPS and District officials by working with consultants hired by the District to inform them of Federal requirements.

The Department is providing assistance to DCPS in developing specific plans for achieving education reform, using various Federal initiatives. The following are four examples in which the Department has withheld grants until DCPS developed quality, strategic plans for use of such Federal funds:

The Department withheld FY 1997 formula **Goals 2000 - State**

Education Systemic Improvement Grant until DCPS satisfied conditions of their FY 1997 award by demonstrating progress on implementing content and performance standards, and an aligned student assessment system. Goals 2000 grants are provided to support the development and implementation of comprehensive education reform plans to improve the teaching and learning of all students, in part through the establishment of high standards with aligned assessments, curriculum, and professional development.

The Department withheld **FY 1997 and FY 1998 Technology Literacy Challenge Fund** formula grants but continued to provide significant policy and technical assistance as DCPS developed its systemic technology strategy to improve the teaching and learning of all children. The Department has not yet released FY 1998 funds. **Technology Literacy Challenge Fund** supports efforts to meet four national technology goals for schools: modern computers, high quality educational software, trained teachers, and affordable connections to the Internet. The Department continues to work towards approval of DCPS's plan for education technology; that plan must be approved by the Department for DCPS to be eligible for subsidies available to schools through the Schools and Libraries Corporation from the Universal Service Fund.

The Department recently signed a 3-year agreement to bring DCPS into compliance with Federal statute and regulations on the education of children with disabilities and is now working with DCPS on the implementation of the agreement. During negotiations, the Department withheld **FY 1997** formula grant funds available under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. IDEA funds are used to help provide children with disabilities free appropriate public education, including special education and related services.

The Department has been working with DCPS to rebuild its Adult Education programs and required DCPS to file an Amendment to its State Plan for Adult Education. The Department attached special conditions to DCPS's **FY 1996 and 1997 Adult Education State-Administered Basic Grant**. The special conditions are intended to track the District's progress in improving educational opportunities for adults who lack literacy skills, ensure accountability, and meet Federal grant matching requirements.

- The Department is working closely with DCPS and community and business organizations to develop a plan and a comprehensive system for students to make a smooth transition from school to work. The **School-to-Work Opportunities State Implementation Grant** is provided to states and communities for the implementation of **School-to-Work** initiatives integrating academic and vocational learning with work-based learning. The initiative is jointly administered with the US Department of Labor. To assist DCPS in developing an effective plan, Federal funds were used to secure an independent private-sector district-wide assessment of the readiness of DCPS's School-to-Work system for implementation. In May 1998, DCPS is expected to submit its application for more than \$9 million. These funds

3 - DC Public Schools Initiative

serve as 'venture capital' to allow states to build comprehensive school-to-work systems that will remain when Federal funds are phased out.

OTHER SELECTED U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Department funds the Laboratory for Student Success, Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory established at Temple University to assist with comprehensive whole-school reform in six of the lowest performing elementary schools.
- The Department identified promising programs and resources to help put in place new system-wide, standards-based curricula for students.
- The Department provided guidance and advice as the system selected its academic improvement reform initiatives and strategies.
- The Department provided advice as DCPS developed an accountability system and selected assessments to measure student performance and help shape instruction to raise the academic achievement of students.
- Working in partnership with 6 local universities, the Corporation for National Service, AmeriCorps*Vista members, and community organizations, the Department guided the implementation of the DC Reads Program, a literacy program modeled after the Administration's America Reads challenge. College work-study students, Department employees, and other volunteers tutor students in 16 of the lowest performing elementary schools.
- The Department created the DC Desk, which provides employees, parents, students, and others with one-stop access to Department resources, including research, practice-based information, and technical assistance.
- The Department temporarily detailed two employees to DCPS to help with the FY 1997 Charter School Federal subgrant process.
- The Department recommended 15 persons to the Mayor as qualified to serve on the 7-member DC Public Charter School Board; subsequently, the Department transmitted the names of 3 individuals to fill an expired 1-year appointment to the Board. In its first year of operation, this Board received 26 applications to establish public charter schools and approved 10; nine will begin operations in Fall of 1998 and one will open in Fall of 1999.
- The Department provided technical assistance and resources to address the Year 2000 computer problem.
- The Department is continuing its 'Adopt A School' relationship with Amidon Elementary school.

ATTACHMENT A

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMPARISON OF SPRING 1997 AND 1998 STANFORD-9 TEST SCORES
IN MATHEMATICS AND READING**

**Percentage of District of Columbia Public School Students Scoring at the various levels
on the SAT-9 in Mathematics by Grade, Spring 1997 and 1998**

Grade	Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998
Grade 1	--	13	--	42	--	32	--	13
Grade 2	--	32	--	39	--	23	--	6
Grade 3	35	31	40	40	20	23	5	7
Grade 4	--	40	--	36	--	19	--	6
Grade 5	--	49	--	33	--	14	--	4
Grade 6	52	40	32	38	13	17	4	5
Grade 7	--	64	--	26	--	8	--	2
Grade 8	71	59	20	30	7	10	2	2
Grade 9	--	61	--	29	--	9	--	2
Grade 10	89	83	8	12	2	3	1	1
Grade 11	--	76	--	12	--	10	--	2

-- Grades were not tested in Spring 1997

**Percentage of District of Columbia Public School Students Scoring at the various levels
on the 1998 SAT-9 in Reading by Grade**

Grade	Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998
Grade 1	14	12	47	41	28	33	11	14
Grade 2	40	29	40	46	16	20	4	5
Grade 3	38	33	34	35	22	23	7	9
Grade 4	42	31	38	40	15	20	5	9
Grade 5	32	25	49	50	17	20	3	5
Grade 6	27	16	48	55	21	25	5	4
Grade 7	--	29	--	48	--	19	--	3
Grade 8	30	20	48	51	19	27	3	3
Grade 9	--	38	--	48	--	11	--	3
Grade 10	51	47	33	37	13	13	3	2
Grade 11	50	46	36	40	12	12	2	2

-- Grades were not tested in Spring 1997

ARLENE ACKERMAN
Superintendent
District of Columbia Public Schools

Arlene Ackerman has served in public education for 28 years. Her work experiences include classroom teacher at both the elementary and middle school levels; principal at the middle school level; Director, Upward Bound Program for first generation college-bound students; Director, Basic Skills Academy for at-risk high school youth; Assistant Superintendent, Special Services, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Academic Achievement; Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer; and currently, Superintendent. Ms. Ackerman possesses a strong leadership background with an unparalleled blend of academic credentials and professional accomplishments.

Ms. Ackerman is affiliated with such organizations as Phi Delta Kappa (Harvard University Chapter), the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, American Association of School Administrators, Private Industry Council (Advisory Board Member), Seattle University (Dean's Advisory Board), and Seattle Pacific University (Superintendent's Preparation Program Advisory Board).

Also, Ms. Ackerman has been honored in Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, and has received numerous honors and awards including Uniquely University City Award for Outstanding Service, Apple for the Teacher Award (Iota Lambda Sorority), Distinguished Alumni Award (Harris Stowe Teachers College), and McDonnell Douglas Fellow (Urban Superintendents Program).

Ms. Ackerman is currently pursuing her doctoral in Administration, Planning and Social Policy through the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Urban Superintendents Program.