



Coffee Chat on Where the Power Lies in DC Government



PARENTS AMPLIFYING
VOICES in EDUCATION



Where the Power Lies: Overview of DC Ed Landscape



To be an effective advocate,
you first have to understand the DC education
ecosystem...

...How it **works**, who has **power**, and how that
power **relates to YOUR priorities!**



The Executive Branch: Mayoral Agencies

DC operates under a system of *mayoral control*...



Mayor Muriel Bowser



- The Mayor has broad power to direct the education system, with oversight from the Council
- Proposes the budget for the city (including education)
- Appoints and oversees the Deputy Mayor of Education (DME), the DCPS Chancellor and appoints the Public Charter School Board
- Signs education legislation into law

The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)



DME Paul Kihn



- Advises the Mayor on education policy
- Carries out the Mayor's vision for education
- Directly manages the State Superintendent for Education and the DCPS Chancellor
- Manages DC Public Library, UDC, & Office of Out of School Time
- Creates the Master Facilities Plan
- Has a staff of 10-15
- Longest tenure as DME in Bower Admin
- Former consultant at McKinsey

Other Players Under the Mayor: OSSE

Office of the **State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)**:

- **Administers federal grants** to schools (DCPS and charter)
- Manages **adult literacy programs**
- Oversees standards and licensing of **child care centers**
- With SBOE, keeps all schools (DCPS and charter) in **compliance with federal laws and programs, which includes:**
 - The **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** which tracks student growth/achievement/discipline
 - **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** which lays out rights for students in special education



Superintendent: Christina Grant

Mayoral Advocacy (OSSE, DME)



- The Mayor proposes **her budget FIRST**.
- Because Council will *largely* only move **existing money** around in the Mayor's budget OR **pass legislation to increase revenue** (which can be MUCH harder), the Mayor is a critical target for advocacy – and an early one.
- **Advocacy opportunities***:
 - **Ongoing**: *blogs, meetings in the community with DCPS, OSSE, etc., working groups, and more.*
 - **January**: *DCPVCW – Meeting with DME, Mayor*
 - **February**: *Mayor's Budget Forums and performance oversight hearings, calls, emails, social media, etc.*
 - **March – May**: *ongoing pressure in case Mayor decides to submit ERRATA letter to increase \$*



The Legislative Branch: DC Council

DC Council



Chairman



Chairman Phil Mendelson

Chair Pro Tempore



At-Large Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie

At-Large



At-Large Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie



At-Large Councilmember Anita Bonds



At-Large Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.



At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson

DC Council



Ward Members



Ward 1 Councilmember
Brianne K. Nadeau



Ward 2 Councilmember
Brooke Pinto



Ward 3 Councilmember
Matthew Frumin



Ward 4 Councilmember
Janeese Lewis George



Ward 5 Councilmember
Zachary Parker



Ward 6 Councilmember
Charles Allen



Ward 7 Councilmember
Vincent C. Gray

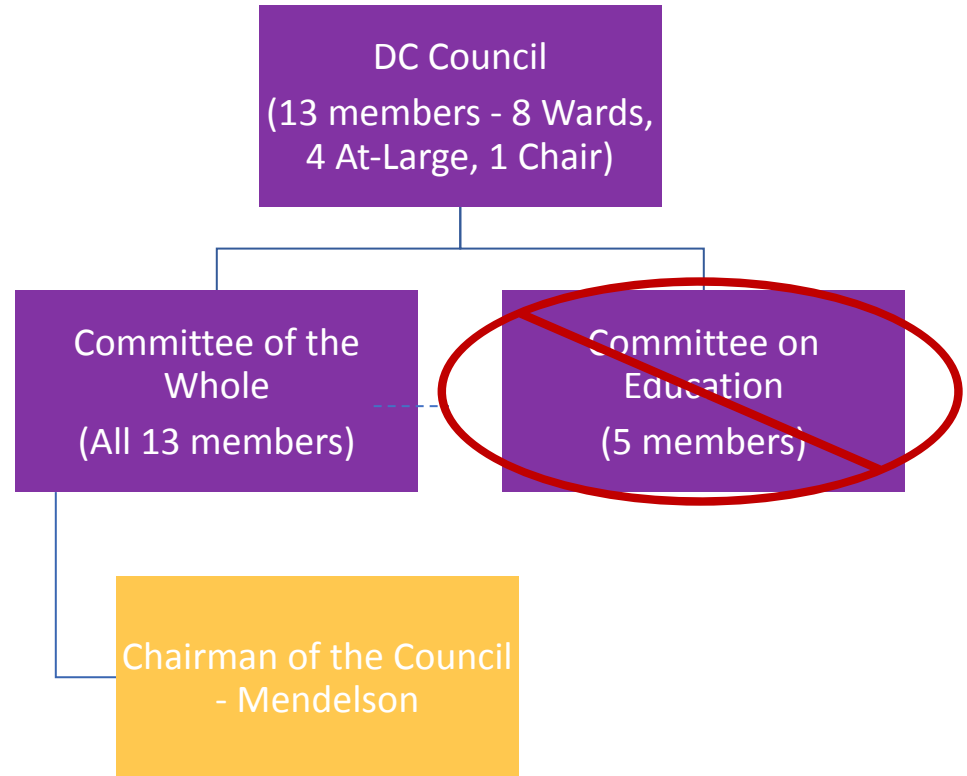


Ward 8 Councilmember
Trayon White, Sr.

How does the DC Council work?



The Committee of the Whole has jurisdiction over education issues, as the Committee on Education was dissolved in fall 2020.



What is the Council's role in education policy?



Committee of the Whole:

- **Reviews Mayor's budget** for programs pertaining to education.
- Has **oversight of city agencies and spending** in education.
- Can **propose legislation** about education.
- Chairman (Mendelson) decides to bring a **bill up for a hearing or not.**
- Final **vote for all legislation and budgets** (before it goes to Congress)
- Includes **ALL Councilmembers** – run by Chair of the Council

DC Council Staff



Each **DC Council office** has a staff of 5-7. Common roles include:

- **Chief of Staff:** oversees the operations and overall direction of the office.
- **Communications Director:** leads the office's interactions with media and the public.
- **Constituency Relations Director:** lead the office's relationships with constituents and serves as a point person to address constituent concerns and problems.
- **Legislative Director:** leads the office's policy development and strategy.


Committee Staff:

- Each of the Council Committee's has a staff of 3-5 as well.
- The Committee staff is *technically* separate from any Council office, they generally act as an extension of the staff of the Chair of the Committee.

DC Council Advocacy



- DC Council can **pass legislation** at any time of the year (while in session).
- While Council becomes MOST important re: the budget **after the Mayor's budget is released** (usually March – May).
- **NOTE**: it is important **to build relationships, support, and champions all year long.**
- **Advocacy opportunities***:
 - **Ongoing**: blogs, meetings in the community, working groups, and more.
 - **January**: DCPVCW – Meeting with CMs
 - **February**: Performance and budget oversight hearings
 - **March – May**: ongoing meetings, social media, emails, letters, calls, etc.



State Board of Education (SBOE)

What about the **State Board of Education?**



In 2007, DC passed the *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (PERAA)*. This changed the role of the SBOE from a more traditional state board to more of a regulatory body.

Now, the SBOE approves:

- Academic standards
- High school graduation requirements
- Definition of “highly qualified teachers”
- Standards for teacher accreditation and certification of teachers
- State accountability plan (ESSA)
- Annual report card (ESSA)



The State Board of Education has:

- 9 elected members (8 Wards, 1 At-Large)
- A staff that includes the Ombudsman, Chief Student Advocate, and an Executive Director
- A **budget** that is approved by **DC Council**

SBOE Elections & Members



The SBOE is elected to **4-year terms** and **half the board is up every 2 years**:

Current Members:

- **Ward 1:** Ben Williams
- **Ward 2:** Allister Chang
- **Ward 3:** Eric Goulet
- **Ward 4:** Frazier O'Leary
- **Ward 5:** Robert Henderson
- **Ward 6:** Brandon Best
- **Ward 7:** Eboni-Rose Thompson
- **Ward 8:** Dr. Carlene Reid
- **At-Large:** Jacque Patterson



SBOE Staff & Structure



- **Executive Director (Bernice Butler):** Oversees the operations of the SBOE, including creating policy briefings and intergovernmental relations.
- **Office of the Ombudsman (Serena Hayes):**
 - The Office of the Ombudsman has a staff of 3 including assistants and a Program Associate.
 - Collects complaints and concerns about DC public education and suggests solutions.
- **Chief Student Advocate (Dan Davis)**
 - Supports students, parents, and families in their advocacy through parent education, one-on-one coaching, resource supports, and trainings in order to amplify the voices of families and communities in processes and decision-making.

SBOE Advocacy



Dr. Jacquie Patterson, (Advocate At-Large)
@DC_Educate

I am so happy to see so many @pave parents testifying tonight to the @DCSBOE! This is the largest contingent of parents I've seen during my tenure on the State Board. Thank you for advocating for more OST & school based mental health funding! You have my support!

#ParentPower



- Parents can **testify** at SBOE **public meetings** to share their experiences and priorities or **join representatives' community meetings/events**.
- While SBOE members do not have a lot of formal power, they **can** help **amplify messages** through their platform or **passing resolutions**.
 - *Examples:*
 - Last year, the SBOE included one of our #ParentPriorities, to increase funding for SBMH, in their budget letter to the Mayor and testified in support of this goal to Council.
 - SBOE Rep. Patterson shared support for our priorities last year on social media after parents testified.

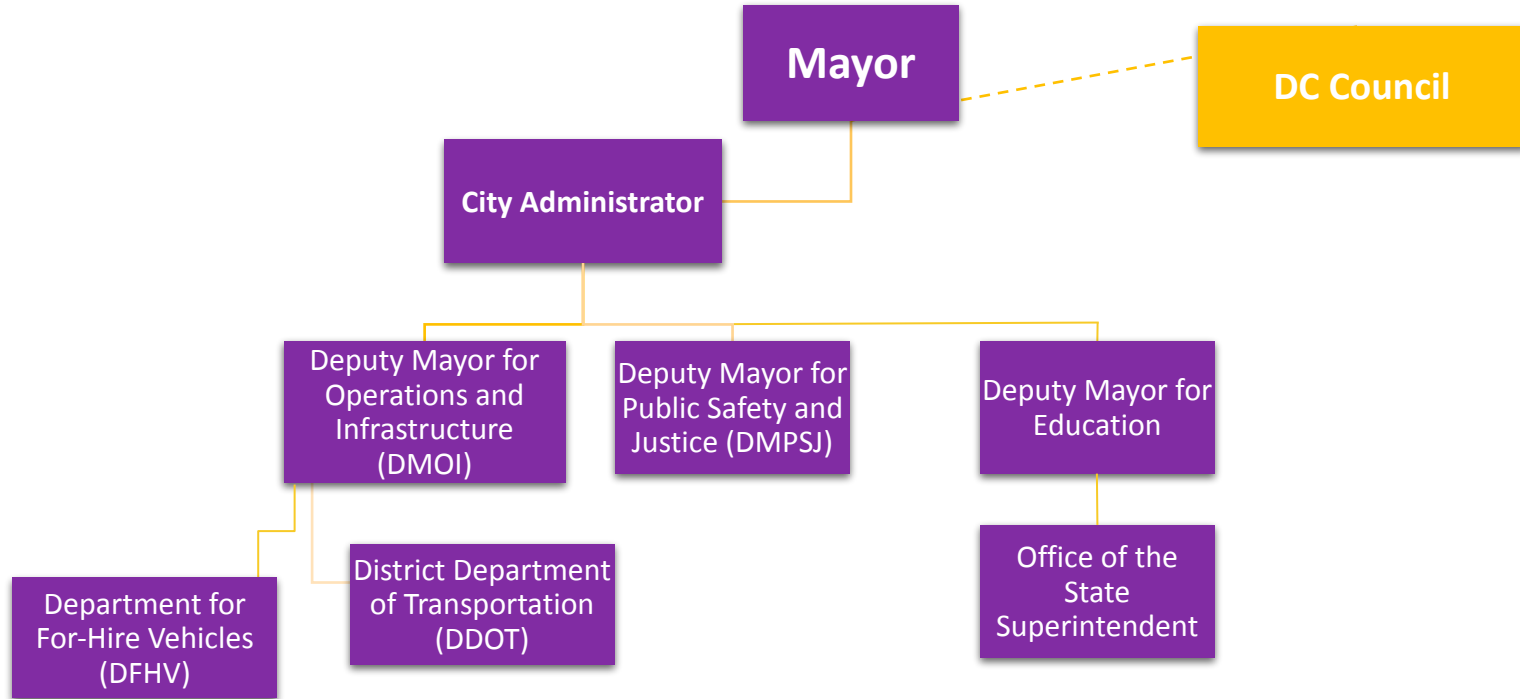


Where the Power Lies in Safe Passage Programs



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The Structure of Mayoral Control





District Department of Transportation

- **Executive Branch:**
 - **Interim Director:** Sharon Kershbaum
 - **Program(s):**
 - School Crossing Guard Program
 - Kids Ride Free
 - Vision Zero
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Transportation and the Environment
 - Chairman: Charles Allen



**Interim Director
Sharon Kershbaum**



**Charles
Allen**



The Department for For-Hire Vehicles

- **Executive Branch:**
 - **Director:** Melinda Boling
 - **DC School Connect Program Manager:** Sinjoyla Townsend
- **Program(s):**
 - DC School Connect
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Public Works and Operations
 - **Chairwoman:** Brianne Nadeau



**Interim Director
Melinda Boling
(withdrew nomination
for permanent seat)**



Brianne Nadeau

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice



- **Executive Branch:**
 - **Deputy Mayor:** Lindsey Appiah
- **Program(s):**
 - Safe Passage, Safe Blocks
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Judiciary and Public Safety
 - Chairwoman: Brooke Pinto



**Deputy Mayor
Lindsey Appiah**



Brooke Pinto

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education



- **Executive Branch:**
 - **State Superintendent:**
Christina Grant
- **Program(s):**
 - OSSE Bus Program
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Committee of the Whole
 - Chairman: Phil Mendelson



**State Superintendent
Christina Grant**



Phil Mendelson



The Mayor's Office

- **Leader(s):**
 - **Mayor:** Muriel Bowser
 - **City Administrator:** Kevin Donahue
- **Programs:**
 - All Safe Passage programs
- **Council Committees with Oversight:**
 - Committee of the Whole
 - Transportation and the Environment
 - Judiciary and Public Safety
 - Public Works and Operations



Mayor Muriel Bowser



Where the Power Lies in Specialized School Programs



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The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

- **Executive Branch:**
 - **Deputy Mayor for Education:** Christina Grant
- **Program(s):**
 - All school programs
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Committee of the Whole
 - **Chairman:** Phil Mendelson



**Deputy Mayor for Education
Paul Kihn**



Phil Mendelson

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education



- **Executive Branch:**
 - **State Superintendent:**
Christina Grant
- **Program(s):**
 - All programs, certifies alternative programs
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Committee of the Whole
 - Chairman: Phil Mendelson



**State Superintendent
Christina Grant**



Phil Mendelson



District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

- **Executive Branch:**
 - **Chancellor:** Lewis Ferebee
- **Program(s):**
 - DCPS programs
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Committee of the Whole
 - **Chairman:** Phil Mendelson



**Chancellor
Lewis Ferebee**



Phil Mendelson



DC Public Charter School Board (DCPCSB)

- **Executive Branch:**
 - **Executive Director:** Michelle Walker-Davis
- **Program(s):**
 - PCS Programs
- **Legislative Branch - Council Committee:**
 - Committee of the Whole
 - **Chairman:** Phil Mendelson



Director
Michelle Walker-Davis



Phil Mendelson



The Mayor's Office

- **Leader(s):**
 - **Mayor:** Muriel Bowser
 - **City Administrator:** Kevin Donahue
- **Programs:**
 - All
- **Council Committees with Oversight:**
 - Committee of the Whole



Mayor Muriel Bowser

DC System of School Choice: Key Legislation



1995: DC School Reform Act  2007: PERAA



 **Mayoral Control**



School Reform Act of 1995

- **Background:** Introducing public charter schools was largely popular locally given the performance of DCPS schools, but DC didn't have resources to stand-up charters without this **Congressional** support and grant funding (like SOAR grants).
- **The gist of the legislation:**
 - Created options for choice: vouchers and public charter schools **were allowed for the first time in DC.**
 - Created the **Public Charter School Board (PCSB)** an **independent authorizer** responsible for:
 - approving new schools or expansion of existing schools,
 - evaluating school progress to goals in their charter,
 - and if needed, closing schools that fail to meet their goals over time.



Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA)



Renamed the *Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA)*. The biggest changes in the 2007 reauthorization were:

- Moved DCPS from under the school board to **mayoral control**, where the **Mayor appoints** the Chancellor of DCPS.
- Established the office of the **Deputy Mayor of Education** under the Mayor.
- **Moved all public charter school oversight** to the PCSB.
- Renamed the *State Education Office* the *Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)* and transferred state-level education agency functions to OSSE.
- Created a **new State Board of Education (SBOE)** and the Office of Ombudsman for Public Education.
 - State Board **advises** OSSE on state education policy issues for all LEAs in District.
 - State Board has **policy-approval authority** over state standards and state accountability plan.

