



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING**  
**1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004**

**David Grosso**  
Councilmember At-Large  
Chairperson, Committee on Education

**Committee Member**  
Health  
Human Services  
Judiciary and Public Safety

July 11, 2018

Interim Chancellor Amanda Alexander  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
1200 First St NE, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20002

Interim Chancellor Alexander:

Thank you for testifying at the Committee on Education's third graduation accountability roundtable on June 13, 2018. I have a number of follow-up questions from the roundtable.

1. During the roundtable, you stated that 59% of DC Public Schools Class of 2018 graduation cohort graduated last month. The reduction from the 73% graduation rate from last school year could be attributed to attendance, student performance, and transfer/withdrawals remaining in cohort. Can you provide a numerical breakdown of this representation?
2. List by high school, disaggregated by race, gender, ward, English Language Learner, the total number of seniors who have:
  - a. Failed due to absences in a least one course;
  - b. Failed to graduate in June;
  - c. Enrolled into one original course credit in summer school;
  - d. Enrolled in their current school for a fifth year;
  - e. Enrolled into an opportunity academy.
3. Share the number and percentage of students in grades ninth through eleventh that were not promoted to the next grade based on term 4 marks. What is being done to provide these students with interventions?
4. Indicate by school the number of families that have appealed a reduced or failing grade due to unexcused absences in the school year 2017-2018?
  - a. How many families won their appeal?
5. How many students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade in school year 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 were promoted to the next grade?



6. State the number of times principals applied for exceptions to promote a student, the name of the school, and the number of times it was granted.
7. The Alvarez & Marsal report found that most DCPS high schools exhibit a culture of passing and graduating students. How is DCPS tackling this issue?
8. The Alvarez & Marsal report also found that DCPS requires an "increasingly burdensome documentation" to fail students. Has DCPS changed anything about this?

On June 22, DC Public Schools ("DCPS") released draft emergency regulations and policies regarding attendance, student promotion, secondary grading, and graduation for public comment. If approved, the proposed changes would go into effect in School Year 2018-2019. As a result, the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Education are holding a joint oversight roundtable on these emergency regulations on Thursday, July 26. I have a number of pre-hearing questions:

### **Truancy**

9. How many DCPS elementary and secondary students received at least one unexcused absence in homeroom this past school year?
10. What are the appropriate absenteeism protocol interventions initiated by classroom or homeroom teachers?

### **Appeals Panel**

11. How long would a member of the appeals panel serve?
12. Who is considered a "duly authorized" representative?

### **Reporting**

13. Can you explain in detail how punitive consequences for highly mobile students will be replaced with opportunities to make up work and show mastery when transferring into a new school?
14. What does it mean for a teacher to have primary responsibility for evaluating the work of the student?
15. Please explain the policy around make-up work.
16. What is considered a "late entry"?

17. What standards does DCPS have to clearly identify a student as "at risk of failing" to meet the content standards?

Please submit your response to me no later than close of business on **Wednesday, July 25, 2018**. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jessica Giles, my legislative assistant, at [jgiles@dccouncil.us](mailto:jgiles@dccouncil.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Grosso".

David Grosso  
Council of the District of Columbia (At-Large)  
Chairperson, Committee on Education

Cc: Chairperson Phil Mendelson  
Members of the Committee on Education  
Ahna Smith, Interim Deputy Mayor for Education