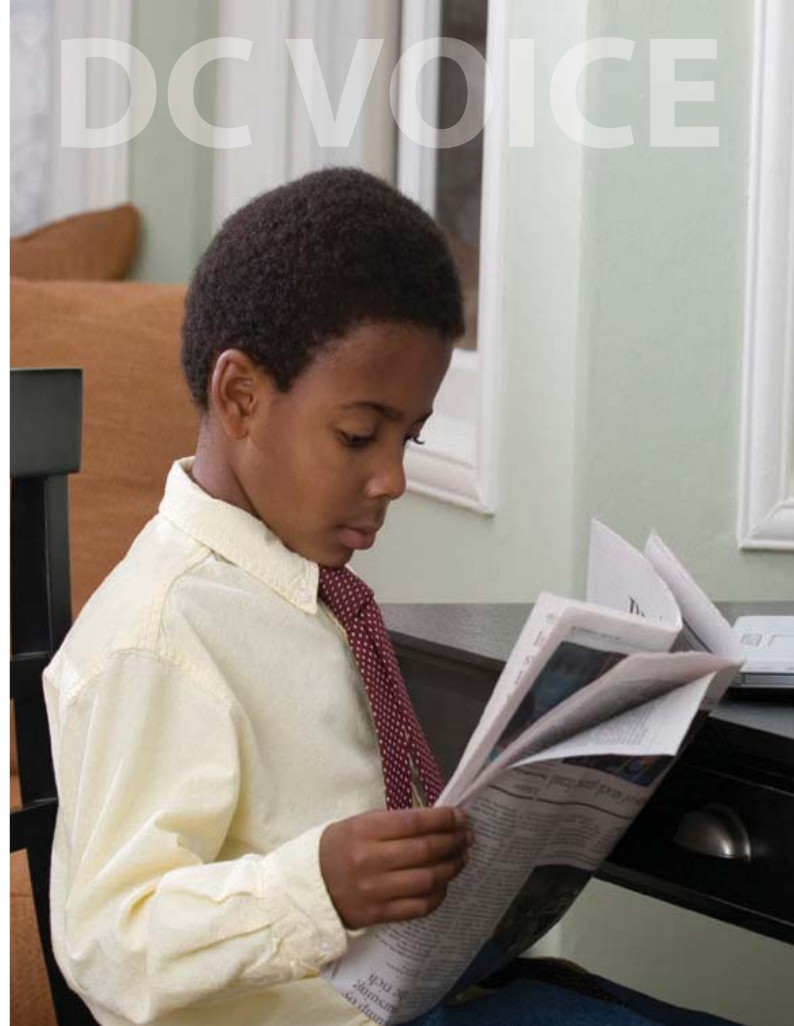
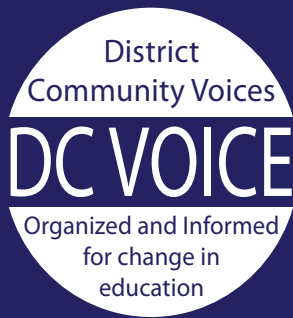


2007
Ready Schools Project
Community Audit
4th Annual Report



Were they Ready?

A report to the community on the Ready Schools Project – a major DC VOICE initiative that collects data about the conditions that exist in DC Public Schools.

Summer 2007

A DCPS Principal's Experience

A Dramatization Based on 137 Principal Interviews*

The beginning of a new school year is supposed to be exciting for students, teachers, parents and principals. New clothes, fresh faces and novel concepts typically signal the opportunity for a fresh start. Yet, when Ms. Madison first started in 2004 as Principal at Hamer Elementary, this was not the case. Instead, frozen water bottles brought from home and covered with aluminum foil sat on many students' desks to combat blistering heat in classrooms since the air conditioning had not been fixed. Teachers rummaged through unpacked boxes of new textbooks on the first day of school, illustrative of the limited amount of time they had to prepare lessons for their students. New teachers arrived at her school with little notice and no transitional supports other than what Ms. Madison could provide on her small, discretionary, local school budget. By the end of 2006, many things in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) had changed but vast improvements were still needed.

As the 2006/2007 school year came to a close, Ms. Madison heard the buzz around a mayoral takeover and changes in the school system. She wondered how that would impact school readiness for 2007/2008. During her drive to work on June 14th she heard on the radio that DC VOICE planned to challenge the city to open the doors to all school buildings that fall for the Ready Schools Project. Even though she, along with 37 colleagues, had participated in the Ready Schools Project each year since she was hired in 2004, something about this audit felt even more significant. A system-wide community audit during a major transitional period in DCPS history would be important for principals because it was a chance for them to inform the Mayor and the new Chancellor of the existing teaching and learning needs across the system.

Following the last week of school for teachers, Ms. Madison took just one week off for vacation. There was a lot of activity going on back at her school that she wanted to oversee. Before going on vacation, she had been notified that her school was selected as one of the Mayor's "buff and scrub" schools, which meant private contractors were

coming in to donate basic maintenance and repair work. Her school had also been selected by the former Superintendent and Board of Education as a "blitz" school entitling her to some long awaited relief in plumbing and electrical systems. Additionally, she had serious planning to do outside of

worrying about facility problems. Her 5th grade math teacher retired, the special education teacher decided to relocate, and she needed to arrange a partnership with the Kennedy Center since she had a limited arts and music budget.

The summer of 2007 was very busy. There were several training opportunities for principals and teachers. Student textbooks arrived earlier than ever this year – most of them prior to the last day of school. Many teacher editions were missing, however, and required numerous phone calls to obtain. As she flipped through the stack of work orders on her desk, she was

grateful that the first and second floors were painted, but she knew there was more extensive repair work that needed to be done to prepare for the opening of school.

After returning from one last break away from the school, Principal Madison was ecstatic to hear that some immediate improvements had been carried out at the school such as lighting, plumbing and new floors. She felt relieved that at least

some of the work orders, which had piled up since before she became the principal, were either completed or in progress. Likewise, Human Resources and the textbook department provided greater assistance than in previous years.

She still had some challenges to face in the area of Human Resources, however, since two additional teachers waited until the last minute to notify her that they were leaving – one to retire and another to work in Montgomery County where she lived. And the DCPS Office of Information and Technology (OIT) had not been very responsive or helpful in figuring out why the new computers which Ms. Madison purchased from her school budget were still not fully installed or hooked up to the internet.

On August 17th, Ms. Madison received an email from Chancellor Michelle Rhee informing her of when DC VOICE staff and volunteers were visiting her school to perform their confidential audit. She wasn't sure what other schools would report but she knew there would be changes to report at her school compared to the last three years. ●



*Actual names have been changed.

Introduction and Background

Although Principal Madison is a fictional character, findings from the 2007 Ready Schools Project (RSP) Community Audit suggest that her experiences were common among other school principals and professionals this summer. Like Principal Madison, each year parents and community members ask: "Will D.C. Schools be ready for the students in the fall?" This year over 490 people responded to help DC VOICE answer that question:

- 191 of them actually visited a school as members of a DC VOICE community audit team, with many of them visiting more than one school;
- Volunteers represented every Ward in the city;
- 33% indicated they were parents; and
- 38 organizations signed on as Ready Schools Project endorsers ranging from the easternmost to the westernmost parts of the city.

RSP 2007 was community action research at its best, with those most affected by public education gathering the data needed to take action that will improve our schools for all students.

As in the past, the RSP was guided by DC VOICE's Supports for Quality Teaching Framework as well as by current DCPS initiatives. The questions focused on whether teaching and learning systemic supports were in place for the opening of school. To ensure reliability and to adequately capture principals' comments, volunteer teams were trained to administer the checklists, and then assigned to audit teams of two to five people. The principals were promised confidentiality: neither individuals nor school names will be identified in the resulting reports.

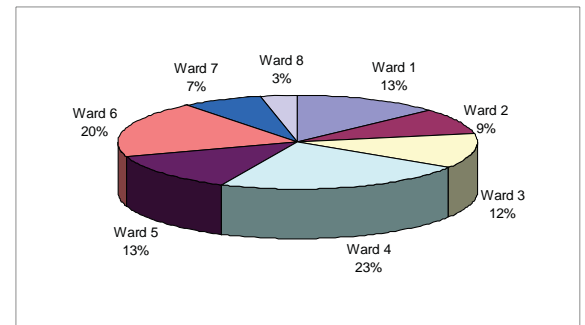
This year's huge outpouring of interest and support enabled us, for the first time, to expand the project to conduct audits at 137 schools from September 4th to October 5th, 2007. Thirty-seven of the schools have now participated all four years of the Project, resulting in the trend data presented in this report (please see DC VOICE Data Dashboard for four-year trends). The core checklist covered school staffing, professional development, teaching and learning conditions, and facilities. Also for the first time, four supplemental checklists on facilities, high schools, English Language Learners and Special Education were developed in conjunction with other non-profits (Parents United, 21st Century School Fund, Children's Law Center, Youth Education Alliance, SHAPPE and the Joint Advisory Council for Linguistic and Cultural Affairs). This report presents the core findings for all 137 schools; the supplemental area findings will be presented later in the school year, starting with the release of the high school findings on November 28, 2007.

Acknowledgments

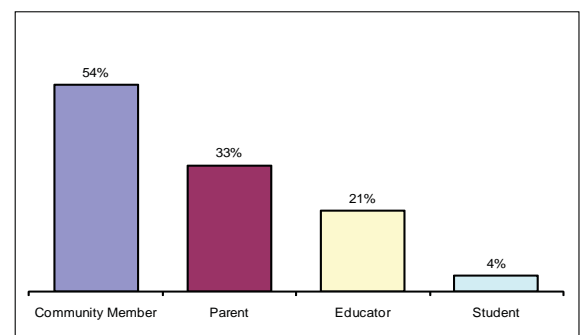
DC VOICE thanks everyone who volunteered and/or supported RSP 2007 in any way. We especially want to thank the 137 school principals who gave so generously of their time and attention, were open and candid during their interviews, and sometimes led the teams on tours of the school as well. We also thank DCPS officials for their support, including the new Chancellor, the Mayor, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education.

For making this work possible this year, we thank the Ford, Meyer, and Herb Block foundations. Because of this involvement and support we were able to gather data across 137 schools which will be used as a foundation to further examine teaching and learning practices in the classroom.

Auditors by Ward



Auditors by Affiliation



Teacher Recruitment and Hiring

What We Learned

Human Resources: The Human Resources Office received mostly positive reviews for working quickly and cooperatively this year. However, late notices given by teachers (August 21st or later) and some assigned teachers who did not show up or quit after a short time, forced principals to complete hiring teachers after the start of school.

Music, Art and Librarians: A few principals rely on private sponsors to fund their art and music teachers. Many have partnerships in place of in-school programs including Arts for Every Student, the Kennedy Center, Arts and Humanities Collaborative, and others. Several schools participate in DCPS's Fillmore Arts Center Program, whereby principals pay for students' instructional time there. Many principals stated that they can only afford a half-time teacher for art and music. About one-quarter of schools said they only had a budget for half-time librarians.



Why This Is Important

School readiness begins with having a well-qualified teacher in every classroom. The Education Trust estimates that if poor and minority children were taught by teachers of the same quality as other children, roughly half of the achievement gap would be erased (The Education Trust 1998). Defining what makes a teacher "high quality" can be difficult and subjective. However, studies have found that teachers who elicit the greatest amount of academic improvement have three key areas of competency: 1) strong verbal and math skills, 2) deep content/subject matter knowledge, and 3) a profound understanding of pedagogy (The Education Trust 1998). Those states that lead the nation in academic achievement have the most highly qualified teachers and have made long-term investments in increasing teacher quality (Darling-Hammond 2000).*

However, too often hiring policies affect the quality of teachers in the classroom. Often the hiring process is so cumbersome and slow that the most qualified applicants withdraw from the hiring process or find employment in another district (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future 1996). This is the danger of the slow Human Resource systems or late notification from departing teachers reported here in this year's findings. Roughly 22% of new public school teachers leave the profession in their first three years, often because they feel unprepared, are given the most difficult classes that no one else wants, and receive little support within the school (Lewis, et al. 1999). Other professional organizations that have dealt directly with teacher recruitment and hiring recommend removing barriers to early hiring, such as late notification of resigning teachers and teacher union transfer requirements, to ensure that urban districts hire and retain qualified teachers (Levin and Quinn 2003).

1a. Percentage of schools that had completed recruitment and hiring of teachers by August 21st, the first day of school for teachers	66%
1b. For schools that had not completed recruitment and hiring of teachers, the average number of teaching vacancies per school (including classroom, special education, and English as a Second Language teachers)	2.4 (113.5 vacancies across 47 schools)
2. Percentage of schools with a DCPS funded music teacher this year	66%
3. Percentage of schools with a DCPS funded art teacher this year	68%
4. Percentage of schools with a DCPS funded librarian this year	88%
5. For schools with delayed hiring, percentage of principals who cited the following causes for delay (Principals could select more than one reason):	
a. Not enough teacher applicants	45%
b. Human Resources Office slow to process paperwork	28%
c. Not informed early enough by staff	53%

Training and Professional Development

What We Learned

Professional Development: While many principals and teachers participated in professional development this summer, principal responses indicated that there was a lack of clear standards and objectives for the training. Most new teachers received general training from DCPS as part of the New Teacher Orientation while other teacher professional development focused on subject-specific training and differentiated instruction. It should be noted that the Ready Schools Project only collected data on the amount of professional development principals and teachers received over the summer, not its quality.

Mentoring: While most new-to-the-system teachers received mentoring support, the quality and time commitment of the mentors varied. System-assigned mentors were given mixed reviews. Some principals said they come two or three times a week, while others said they had not come at all, or failed to coordinate their visits with the principal. Local school-assigned mentoring usually happens by pairing a veteran or retired teacher with a new teacher for support and guidance.

1. Percentage of principals who participated in any professional development activities through DCPS this summer	83%
2. Percentage of schools at which teachers participated in any professional development through DCPS this summer, as reported by the respective principals	86%
3a. Percentage of schools at which all new-to-the-system teachers are receiving mentoring support	88%
3b. Of the schools where mentoring was reported, percentage of schools at which new-to-the-system teachers receive each type of mentoring (could select more than one type):	
a. System-assigned mentoring	69%
b. Local school-assigned mentoring	84%
c. Other (such as Teach for America and DC Teaching Fellows)	8%



Why This Is Important

Although research consistently shows that teacher quality is the most important factor contributing to student performance, professional development of teachers remains an area in need of improvement (Neville and Robinson 2003). Previous DC VOICE work with DCPS parents and parent focus groups has reflected a desire for increased professional development of both new and veteran teachers, particularly in the areas of differentiated learning, cultural sensitivity, and communication with parents and students (DC VOICE 2005; DC VOICE 2006). Although the No Child Left Behind Act requires states to report on the percentage of teachers participating in “high quality” professional development each year, the definition of “high

quality” remains unclear, and professional development varies significantly from state to state (Stullich, et. al 2006). As a result of unclear objectives, the impact of professional development has traditionally been unimpressive. A report released by The Finance Project found that, “the majority of school districts and universities in the country do not provide the kind of professional development that has the capacity to bring about change” (Neville and Robinson 2003).

The National Assessment of Title I: Interim Report, released by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, shows that professional development is most meaningful when it is sustained and intensive, focused on academic content, and involves teamwork and active participation (Stullich, et. al 2006). Studies have shown that higher levels of student achievement are associated with teachers who have participated in ongoing professional development that focused on both subject matter and instructional theory (e.g. emphasis on the mechanics of long-division as well as how students learn long-division) and is connected to the curriculum (Cohen and Hill 1997; Wiley and Yoon 1995; Brown, et al. 1995). Additional research has shown that quality induction programs prepare teachers and reduce turnover (Neville, et al. 2005).

Teaching and Learning Conditions

What We Learned

Textbooks: A majority of principals reported that they received their books in time for the opening of school this year. In schools where there were problems, they reported that the textbook staff was quick to respond. The biggest problem was that more students enrolled than projected at many schools causing a shortage in books.

Instructional Supplies: Most principals felt they had an adequate amount of instructional supplies. A few noted that they had local business partnerships or relied on PTA support to fill in any holes in the instructional supplies budget, which could leave schools without these connections at a disadvantage. Some schools needed big-ticket items, such as a photocopier, but were otherwise adequately supplied. The procurement process, however, remains slow and unreliable causing some schools to report that they had not received their supplies by the opening of school.

Technology: Two-thirds of principals have computers in all classrooms, but struggle to obtain sufficient technological supports. Many schools reported having no funds to hire anyone to help with computer and network maintenance and said they received little support in responding to technology needs. A majority of principals reported having internet connectivity issues, where the internet either fails (goes down) sporadically or does not work at all.

Why This Is Important

Teachers must be afforded the tools to effectively teach their students a rigorous curriculum. These tools include textbooks, supplies, functioning computer technology, and a safe environment. The Center for Teaching Quality notes that “teachers must have the resources and supports they need to serve all students well, and without comprehensive and sustained efforts to improve teacher working conditions, other reform efforts could go unfulfilled” (Emerick and Hirsch 2006). In three reports using data from three states, the Center for Teaching Quality found that teacher working conditions – time, empowerment, leadership, professional development, and facilities and resources – are linked to improved student performance on state assessment tests (Hirsch 2005-1; Hirsch 2005-2; Emerick and Hirsch 2006; and Emerick, et al. 2006). In addition, they found that positive working conditions lead to greater teacher retention, providing a more stable environment for students as well as an opportunity for growth and development of school teaching staff (Emerick, et al. 2006). Studies show that there is incredible potential for educational advancement through using computer technology in the classroom (Judge et al. 2004).



1. Percentage of schools that received all required textbooks in time for the opening of school	78%
2. Percentage of schools possessing an adequate amount of DCPS funded instructional supplies	86%
3a. Percentage of schools with functional computers available in all classrooms	67%
3b. In schools where not all classrooms had functional computers, average percentage of classrooms with functional computers	55%
4. Average percentage of functional computers with internet accessibility	76%
5. Percentage of schools having the budgeted safety and security EQUIPMENT in place for the opening of school	82%
6. Percentage of schools having the budgeted safety and security PERSONNEL in place for the opening of school	93%

Facilities

What We Learned

New Resources: There was overwhelming, though not universal, approval of the facilities work accomplished this summer. With more than a quarter billion dollars spent on facilities during the first 100 days following the mayoral takeover, it is no surprise that many veteran principals felt it was the most work they had ever seen done in DCPS. Several noted that the “blitz” work started too late in the summer and was still ongoing at the time of the interview. A few principals also noted that their “blitz” or “buff and scrub” team never showed up, while others felt neglected because they were not a “blitz” or “buff and scrub” school.



Disparities: There were differences among wards in whether or not principals reported that repairs were completed by the opening of school. Schools in wards 3, 5, 6, and 7 were more likely to report that all repairs were completed while schools in wards 1, 2, 4 and 8 were more likely to report that either some or none of their repairs were completed. Overall, many principals expressed approval of the new facility investments with more veteran principals being particularly impressed (when compared to principals overall, the 23 New Leaders for New Schools principals (NLNS) – a group of newly hired and non-conventionally trained principals - rated supports for opening of schools 8% lower than their non-NLNS peers).

1a. Percentage of schools in which ALL BASIC MAINTENANCE was carried out this summer (Prompt: grounds maintenance, deep cleaning, small plumbing issues)	71%
1b. Percentage of schools in which SOME BASIC MAINTENANCE was carried out this summer	28%
2a. Percentage of schools that received ALL PROMISED REPAIRS during the summer (Prompt: system-provided repairs specifically requested through work orders)	12%
2b. Percentage of schools in which SOME PROMISED REPAIRS were carried out this summer	80%



Why This Is Important

Facilities are an essential component of overall school quality. The impact of school facilities on teaching and learning is well documented, and numerous studies from across the nation demonstrate a strong link between the quality of a school’s facilities and the level of both student achievement and teacher success (Lackney 1999; Lowe 1990; Phillips 1997; Schneider 2002; Buckley, et al. 2004). In one study, teachers who reported that they suffered adverse health effects from school facilities (e.g. poor indoor air quality) were more likely to consider leaving either their school or the teaching profession as a whole (Schneider 2002). Another study found that the quality of facilities had a greater influence on whether a teacher would stay at a given school than their salary (Buckley, et al. 2004).

This year marked a dramatic increase in the amount of attention and money that was directed towards the improvement of DCPS facilities. This summer, \$80 million was spent on repairs to 71 of 141 schools. An additional \$24 million was spent to address problems with leaking and plumbing, and \$27 million was set aside for repairing athletic fields. In addition, Mayor Fenty’s “buff and scrub” initiative, in which contractors donated their repairs services to DCPS, impacted 54 schools this summer.

Summary

When DC VOICE released a summary of the first three years of its Ready Schools Project research in 2006, we provided several recommendations, renewed previous ones and focused significantly on three of them:

- **Strengthen Management in All Areas;**
- **Make the Central Office Supportive of Local Schools; and**
- **Sharpen the Focus on Student Achievement.**

When the school leadership transition began this spring, we were pleased to see that the new administration took direction from the community's previous recommendations on school readiness. This year's RSP research findings provide multiple examples of careful consideration by the new administration in these areas.

Many of the principals interviewed this year spoke of changes in the culture of their relationship with central administration. This was demonstrated by greater accessibility to the decision-makers, more responsiveness to problems and quicker follow-up in solving them. Generally, the 137 interviews which were conducted revealed a more helpful service attitude towards local schools. They also noted that a message and expectation of greater accountability for academic performance accompanied these changes.



The new DCPS leadership structure launched on June 12, 2007 and the wealth of additional funding and other resources made available this summer combined to have a large impact on the opening of schools and contributed to many positive findings in this report. Some of the upward trends are the fruit of earlier investments from the previous administration and will need to be sustained if performance is to continually improve in these areas.

The Mayor, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the DCPS Chancellor, and Director of the Office of Facilities Modernization made it clear upon their arrival that their initial efforts would focus on the opening of school – the repeated focus of the Ready Schools Project in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Data from the 2007 report provide solid evidence of the new leadership's attention to local school-opening needs this year. One school leader remarked, *“Central office was very well organized and responsive, as well as persistent in finding out if we were ready for the opening of school.”* Additionally, more principals reported that both Human Resources and textbook operations had improved.

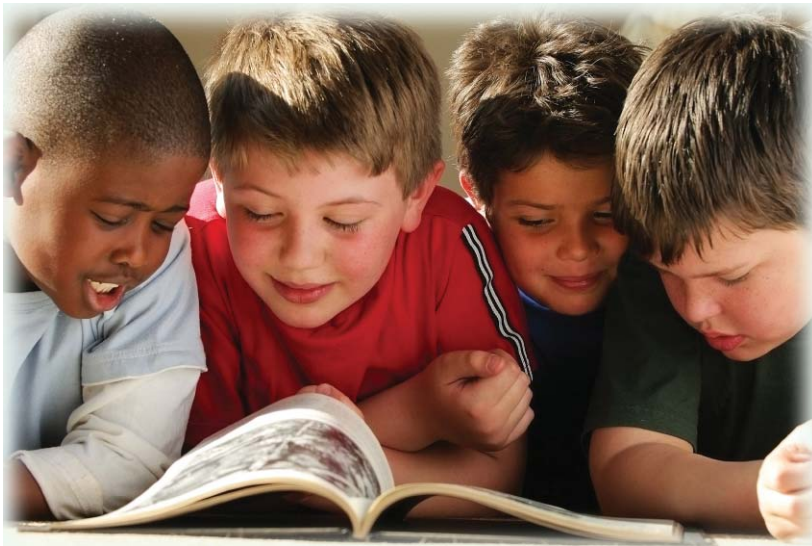
“HR still needs to improve paper management, but now the service is direct, personal, prompt, and accurate. Like night and day; much better.”
– DCPS Principal

Physical improvement in almost all schools was the most dramatic measure of change this year, with the reporting of “all or some repairs completed” rising from 71% in 2006 to 93% percent in 2007. In 2005 when DC VOICE successfully convinced city leadership to designate \$6 million in surplus money to facilities preparedness, the DCPS Facilities Director noted in thanking DC VOICE staff that this new investment doubled his entire budget for summer facilities maintenance and school preparedness to \$12 million. This year's summer facilities investments exceeded a quarter billion dollars, or 20 times that previous budget! The additional resources expended for the opening of school

this year have been heartening for many principals and validating for DC VOICE and other education advocacy organizations which have fought for additional funding for public schools as well as better supports from the city government. As principals reported greater responsiveness, they also reported on resources provided by other city departments such as the fire department delivering textbooks to schools, and members of the police department helping with landscaping work on the 3rd annual DCPS Beautification Day.

Overall, it was a very positive school opening this year. A vast majority of the principals felt this was an improved start and they have an optimistic view of the rest of the school year. The increased access to and responsiveness of decision-makers was clearly appreciated. The RSP 2006 report referenced specific needs for increased communication, clarified lines of responsibility, and in general the need for a system-wide culture that actively supports local schools. This year's research shows movement in this direction.

Central Administration: The new central administration was seen as more responsive, proactive, and willing to help this year. Principals felt that the central administration was there to support the principals and not the other way around. Chancellor Rhee also received high marks for her responsiveness and for opening the lines of communication between local schools and the central administration.



However, some still felt that there was miscommunication and overlap as several departments tried to handle the same issue. This led to extra work trying to sort things out and a feeling of being micromanaged in some cases.

Human Resources: Principals reported improved Human Resources services this year. Principals felt that Human Resources staff moved more quickly and more responsively to their needs. Human Resources personnel changes at the end of the summer made it difficult to fill last minute staffing needs.

Facilities: Most principals felt that their facilities needs were taken care of, even if the work continued into the school year. Many principals felt that this was the most facilities work they had

ever seen done at DCPS and they were highly complimentary of the contractors who came into their buildings. A few thought that the support was not well organized and that it took extra effort to coordinate the facilities work done in their building with the needs of their teachers. Several principals felt that this year they will be able to focus more on instruction and academic achievement since their facilities concerns are lessened.

Procurement: For many principals procurement remains a problem, as it is slow and unreliable. Supplies ordered in June did not always arrive in time for the school opening. Principals were forced to call or visit the supply depot in order to get answers to their questions.

A Vocal Minority: Finally, a small minority of principals did not feel the effects of the administrative change this year. They felt that this school opening was the same as other school openings they had been a part of. These principals also felt they did not receive support from the central administration and that their needs were not met on any level.

Summary

The average rating from principals outlining their level of satisfaction with overall systemic supports received. 3.8

(1 = little support 5 = all necessary support)

By all accounts this represents a high level of satisfaction among the 137 principals interviewed. The rating from the 18 principals who have participated every year in the Ready Schools Project shows a dramatic increase from 3.08 in 2006 to 4.0 in 2007. In 2008, DC VOICE looks to expand the scope of this project to ensure that this heightened level of satisfaction trickles down to teachers, staff, and most importantly, students.

"The textbook office has been more responsive than ever before, which is the biggest change. A process is in place and I felt like everyone was being held more accountable"

-DCPS Principal

* A full list of works cited is available at www.dcvoice.org or by request to (202) 986-8535 or dcvoice@dcvoice.org

Recommendations

“(the) New administration has increased the conversation about the schools; now we need to raise conversation about H(uman) R(esources), procurement and professional development.”

– DCPS Principal

DC VOICE makes these recommendations to give a clearer voice to local school concerns, to provide information and direction for community action, and to help sharpen the policy discussion needed for school improvement. Recommendations have been assigned among four different groups – Mayor/Chancellor, City Council, businesses and community – reminding us that we all have a responsibility for providing high quality education for all students.

District Leadership

	Mayor/Chancellor	City Council
Recruitment & Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin implementing the Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission by deploying other city social service agencies into local schools. • Require each city agency to submit a plan for how it will interact to support local schools. • Mount an aggressive hiring campaign for high need areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and strengthen the DCPS Declaration of Intent (teacher transfer and retirement) policy so that many principals are not left scrambling to fill teacher vacancies due to late notifications of retirement or resignations as late as the first day of school.
Training & Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive professional development plan that includes an annual master calendar, is linked to school-based professional development, and is driven by academic performance and demonstrated school needs. • Incorporate practices of effective DCPS principals and teachers into system-wide professional development. • Be sure that funding for professional development is clearly reflected in the proposed DCPS budget as submitted to the Council and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge the school system with developing a comprehensive professional development plan that uses data to improve instruction, clarifies central and local school responsibilities, and includes an annual master calendar and budget. • Council must also commit to supporting and sustaining funding for a comprehensive professional development plan rather than writing it off as central “bloat” or extraneous funding.
Teaching & Learning Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a user-friendly procurement system that enables quick and easy purchase and tracking of essential goods and services. • Implement a system for tracking and responding to “live-time” textbook needs. • Carefully monitor large technology contracts to ensure that satisfactory service and support are being delivered to the school system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct critical oversight into areas such as textbooks early in the summer, not waiting until mid-September when many children have already gone weeks without books. • Require a budget which provides real technical support and comprehensive technology for all the city’s public schools.
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the “buff and scrub” partnerships so that more local businesses interact with local schools and become knowledgeable about their needs. • Widely publish which businesses participate so that the community has that information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and clarify the “blitz” program as part of the Master Facilities Plan (MFP) to ensure that all schools know what to expect and all back work orders are addressed. • Update the MFP so the community and City Council can conduct better oversight of this sizeable city investment.

Community Leadership

	Businesses	Community
Recruitment & Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the DCPS Central Administration to develop and fund hiring incentives for teachers who commit to working in DCPS for a number of years. • Include housing incentives so that teachers can live and work in the same community, subsidized moving expenses for incoming teachers, or subsidized certification and professional development for teachers in hard to staff areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the city keeps its promise to fulfill the Master Education Plan (MEP) requirements for librarians and art and music programs at every school.
Training & Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a larger role in extending training and effective business practices to local school leaders just as businesses do for their own managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice concerns about the importance of ongoing training for all school personnel. • Demand that DCPS leaders show where money is earmarked in the budget for professional development. • Monitor professional development funding through the review period and passage of the DCPS budget.
Teaching & Learning Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner by providing technical support similar to that provided in business settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand that businesses which community members patronize support the school system. • Ensure that students are pre-registered at the school where they intend to enroll.
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally support local schools by sponsoring additional "blitz" or "buff and scrub" teams. • Encourage employees to participate in the annual Beautification Day activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the annual Beautification Day in greater numbers. • Demand that businesses and community members do their part to improve public school facilities through one of the aforementioned options. • Insist on community involvement in the revision of the MFP.

DC VOICE STAFF & TEAM*

Jeff Smith
 Erika Landberg
 Arielle Etienne
 Hanna Doerr
 Jenny Auguste
 Abby Dugan
 David Friedman
 Yashema Evans
 Tamara Johns
 Adrienne Thadani
 Elissa Salas

Take More Action- Call or email your Council members urging them to implement the recommendations of the 2007 Ready Schools Report.
 Visit www.dcvoice.org or call 986-8535 for other action steps

Ward One 724-8181 jgraham@dccouncil.us	Ward Two 724-8058 jackevans@dccouncil.us	Ward Three 724-8062 mchech@dccouncil.us	Ward Four 724-8052 mbowser@dccouncil.us
Ward Five 724-8028 hthomas@dccouncil.us	Ward Six 724-8072 twells@dccouncil.us	Ward Seven 724-8068 yalexander@dccouncil.us	Ward Eight 724-8045 mbarry@dccouncil.us
At-Large 724-8174 kbrown@dccouncil.us	At-Large 724-8064 pmendelson@dccouncil.us	At-Large 724-7772 dcatania@dccouncil.us	At-Large 724-8105 cschwartz@dccouncil.us
DC Council Chair 724-8032 vgray@dccouncil.us			

* DC VOICE staff also participated as RSP auditors.

DC VOICE Volunteer Auditors

Mai Abdul-Rahman
 Anda Adams
 Camille Alexander
 Hugh Allen
 Alyssa Alston
 Maame Ameyaw
 Christine Armstrong
 Elba Arrocha
 Brenda Artis
 Anne-Marie Bairstow
 Rick Bardach
 Suzanne Barr
 Brenda Batts
 Allison Bayley
 Cynthia Bell
 Margot Berkey
 Lois Berkowitz
 Tom Black
 George Blackmon
 Evelyn Bourne
 Emily Bowe
 Carroll Bradshaw
 Nakisha Brannum
 Robert Brannum
 Meg Brinckman
 Corae Briscoe
 Michael Burke
 Thomas Byrd
 Connie Chubb
 Larry Clark
 Michelle Clay
 Bryant Coleman
 Susan Coleman
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 Maxine Freund
 Rev. Louise Green

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 Christy Kavulich
 Cheryl Kragnes
 Mary Levy
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 Jaques Patterson
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