

Excel Academy: Transition Update Frequently Asked Questions

Excel Academy is currently transitioning to become DC Public Schools' first all-girls public school for School Year 2018-2019. We are committed to supporting Excel Academy with their mission to prepare students to succeed in high school and college and to develop the skills and confidence they need to make healthy, positive lifestyle choices. This FAQ is meant to provide important information to the Excel community on the transition.

Leadership Structure & Staffing

Who is the new principal and how were they selected?

We are excited to announce Tenia Pritchard, our 2018 DCPS Principal of the Year, as the principal of Excel Academy for School Year 2018-2019! Ms. Pritchard was the Principal at Whittier Education Campus in DCPS, which also serves grades PK3-8 and has been with DCPS for 18 years. Principal Pritchard is a DCPS graduate and brings a wealth of experience from her previous positions of teacher, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, and Principal with DCPS.

When will I get to meet the new principal?

Join Ms. Pritchard and other DCPS staff at Excel's April Open Houses:

- Open House: Wednesday, 4/4 at 9:30 AM
- Open House: Thursday, 4/19 at 6:30 PM

DCPS will be working with the Excel community to schedule more opportunities for the community to meet Ms. Pritchard and ask questions. In the meantime, you can contact her at Tenia.Pritchard@dc.gov.

How does this transition impact current Excel staff?

All current Excel Academy staff have been invited to apply online for School Year 2018-2019. DCPS is committed to ensuring current Excel staff are provided the necessary support and guidance through this process. The DCPS Staffing Team conducted three staff meetings with current Excel staff in the past month to share more about the application and interview process. Ms. Pritchard is scheduled to begin interviews with current Excel staff as early as this week.

What will the leadership structure be for the upcoming school year?

Excel Academy will have one principal. The principal is currently identifying her senior leadership team, and all available positions will be finalized by early April.

Building/Facilities

Will Excel Academy stay in its current location for School Year 2018-2019?

Yes, Excel Academy will remain in its current building (Birney: 2501 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave S.E., Washington DC, 20020) for the upcoming school year and for School Year 2019-2020.

Are there any other changes that will impact the current Excel Academy space?

Yes, Excel Academy will be co-locating with another public charter school for SY18-19. The lease for the Birney building is managed through Building Hope, an organization that works with charter schools in DC. DCPS worked with Building Hope to advocate for Excel to be able to remain in the Birney building for SY18-19 and SY19-20. Building Hope has also chosen to partner with a charter school, Community College Preparatory Public Charter School (CCPrep), and provided them with the ground (basement) floor of the Birney building only. CCPrep provides adult education services to District residents.

Co-locations are not uncommon, and we will work closely with the charter school and the Excel community to develop a co-location plan that ensures the safety, security, and privacy of our Excel students. Starting in SY18-19, Excel Academy students will enter through the main entrance on the 1st floor and occupy the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors. Excel students/staff will also have access to the cafeteria on the ground floor. Excel will access the cafeteria through a dedicated stairwell that is for the sole use of Excel students and staff. We plan to secure the stairway with an alarmed door. DCPS is committed to prioritizing the safety of our students and ensuring the two schools are separate and that the charter school in no way interferes with or interacts with Excel students at any point.

Enrollment

Where can I get information about re-enrolling for SY18-19?

Enrollment is open for SY18-19! Current students are guaranteed a space at Excel Academy for next school year and should complete enrollment as soon as possible. To complete enrollment, you will need to provide proof of DC residency. For more information on how to provide proof of residency or to download a DCPS enrollment packet, please visit www.enrolldcps.dc.gov. Enrollment packets are also available in the front office. Throughout the month of April, a DCPS enrollment specialist will be at Excel Academy every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If you need any assistance, please reach out to Excel Registrar, Ms. Moody, or Caitlyn Valadez, your main DCPS enrollment specialist, at Caitlyn.valadez@dc.gov or (202) 525-1635.

I need support with completing my enrollment packet. Who do I contact?

If you need assistance completing the Enrollment Packet you can visit Ms. Moody at Excel Academy's front office/(202) 373-0097 or contact Caitlyn Valadez from the DCPS Enrollment Team at Caitlyn.valadez@dc.gov or (202) 535-1635.

When are the Open Houses and other opportunities for re-enrollment?

Please join us at any of the following events at Excel Academy to learn more about the transition as well as an opportunity to submit enrollment paperwork. New event dates will be added to Excel Academy's website: www.excelcps.org.

- Open House: Wednesday, 4/4 at 9:30 AM
- Open House: Thursday, 4/19 at 6:30 PM
- Enrollment Fair: Saturday, 4/21 from 9 AM - 12 PM

Can prospective (new) families still submit a lottery application if they missed the lottery deadline?

Yes! New students should apply via the My School DC Lottery by completing a post-lottery application. If you have a child with a sibling already attending Excel Academy, make sure you claim your "Sibling Preference" when completing the application. To apply, please visit myschooldc.org to complete an application. For assistance, please contact Caitlyn Valadez at Caitlyn.Valadez@dc.gov or (202) 535-1635.

Community Engagement & Feedback

What role will parents play in the transition?

DCPS values parents as partners. Therefore, during the next few months of transition at Excel Academy we want to ensure parents are involved as much as possible. During the transition, the DCPS Office of Family and a Public Engagement (OFPE) will facilitate an Excel Academy Parent Advisory Group. This group will advise DCPS leadership and the Excel Principal on a variety of school matters, including budget, priorities, school culture, and family/community engagement. Parents will work closely with Excel Academy and DCPS leadership to discuss what should be in place to determine the best outcomes for SY18-19.

What is a Local School Advisory Team (LSAT)?

At the beginning of next school year, parents who are interested in continuing to work closely with Excel Academy leadership will have the opportunity to run for a position on the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) where the work will continue. The LSAT is a group of elected and appointed members that exists for every DCPS school. The team (formerly the Local School Restructuring Teams) consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and in some cases students, to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and high achievement for all students. Some of these matters include the local school budget, school goals, and other school initiatives. To learn more about the LSAT, visit <http://bit.ly/dcpslsat> for more information. Elections for the Excel Academy LSAT will take place at a later date. Contact Sharona Robinson, (202) 423-5091 or Sharona.Robinson@dc.gov, for additional information.

How do I learn more about the community engagement process?

For more information about DCPS community and parent engagement or to get more involved, contact Sharona Robinson, Wards 7 & 8 Community Action Team Coordinator, at (202) 423-5091 or sharona.robinson@dc.gov.

How can current Excel families provide feedback or share any comments/concerns around the transition?

Parent questions and comments are always welcome! Please reach out to Helen.Tzow@dc.gov or (202) 520-2277 with any questions or comments.