



WE ARE
GOVERNMENT OF THE
WASHINGTON DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
John A. Wilson Building | 1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 307 | Washington, DC 20004

September 17, 2021

Dear Ms. Brown and Ms. Petroshius,

Thank you for your deeply thoughtful letter. Please know that I share your commitment to ensuring the safety of our children and families as they learn in our schools. We know that the first few weeks of reopening have been a mixture of emotions for many of our families – of both excitement and uncertainty. We recognize more work needs to be done to keep student, educator, and staff well-being front and center, and we are constantly adapting during this unprecedented reopening of our city.

→ No. Letter says 3; 1 waxed, 2 unvaxed

I am very sorry to hear that two of your children have tested positive for COVID-19. I hope they are doing well and in active recovery. We know that the virus continues to disproportionately impact the unvaccinated populations in our city, a growing share of which are children 11 years old and younger. Right, which are 59,000 children in DCPS + charter.

(PK3-6th).

You are OK with not doing more for them?

our letter never

says IPL

IS BAD.

Nice TRY.

we say

some do

need a

virtual

option:

1) Family

Health

2) Quarantine

Learn.

What

Ru afraid

of?

Mean

Nothing!

But it is not only the physical ramifications of the virus that concerns us. Mayor Bowser is committed to full-time in-person learning because it is necessary to reduce widening opportunity gaps among our students, and essential for their social-emotional well-being. Having our students in schools with their teachers and peers, and able to access the supports they need, will help us heal from the harmful impacts of the pandemic.

Unless in quarantine or family health issue then = NO SUPPORTS!

We agree that clear communication is critical to building confidence with our families, and we are continuing to work with DC Public Schools (DCPS) to ensure that communications are quickly distributed when a case has occurred, what the next steps are, and how we will ensure learning continues for their child. That process needs to be more streamlined, and it will continue to be more efficient as we establish and institutionalize these additional protocols.

How? What will you do?

Regarding testing in our schools, the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) has continued to ramp up its school testing program – both its random, asymptomatic testing program in all DCPS and many charter schools, as well as its symptomatic testing program. The District has transitioned to an opt-out model, which has significantly increased participation. Participating schools are aiming to test a random sample of 10-20% of students each week, in line with health guidance issued by the CDC and DC Health. Through the first two weeks of operations, OSSE has recorded a positivity rate of .6% among symptomatic and asymptomatic students that were tested. We will continue to share those results on a weekly basis on coronavirus.dc.gov/data. In addition, the District has invested significant resources in school-based testing, including stipends to schools that choose to run their own testing program.

→ How many? Where? DCPS/Charter? How successful?
→ We know it's not ubiquitous. Tell us! What can we learn + do better?
In all schools?

Data: This positivity rate mixes asym + symp making it impossible to read.
asym tested, positive + saliva (insuff.). Same for symp. Same for staff. Every DCPS/charter. Also in all data reporting on cases need: Denominators, testing rule w/ it's planned + actually tested; Nasal for ECE - std w/ lab + Results in 24 hours.

→ we need transparency. This is a missed opportunity to showcase how you are being parent/student/safety-responsive! Instead we get vague + murky? Which schools got \$? For what? What schools didn't + why + how is their safety met? Without facts, + a lived experience of many this is NOT happening then it's not

I agree with you that we should prioritize outdoor learning and lunch whenever possible in our schools. The District has invested \$9 million toward outdoor learning resources and other tools to support innovative in-person learning at DCPS. So far this school year, DCPS schools have purchased over \$4 million in outdoor furniture for schools. School leaders are continuing to explore available opportunities for outdoor meals and learning. We know that gun violence and other safety concerns impact our schools differently, and it is critical that we respect and trust our school leaders to find solutions that meet the needs of their communities. OSSE has provided extensive technical assistance to schools to promote not only outdoor eating, but also outdoor learning, and we will continue to engage with school leaders and communities to make the best decisions for their students.

↓
This evades
the ?'s we
asked:

1) what
learning is
available to

Kids in
quarantine

2) will you
ensure siblings

of + cases
quarantine

to avoid
spread.

See Damas's
daughter

ex in
letter.

For quarantining students and staff, we will continue to follow the science and health guidance from local and national agencies, including the CDC and DC Health. Quarantining is critical to slowing the spread of COVID when a case has been detected. But we also know that it can disrupt day-to-day activities, including in-person learning. We need students learning in the classroom as much as possible and we will apply quarantining measures in all circumstances when it is recommended by health experts.

We are closely monitoring nap time and commit to working with DCPS to ensure that all protocols are being followed, including having HEPA filters available in every classroom where children may be napping.

→ what
specifically
- more
space?
where +
how much

- what is
Hepa/gap

I understand and respect our families' desire for expanded virtual options. At this time, however, the Administration is not considering amending our virtual learning posture. With appropriate mitigation measures in place, in-person schooling continues to be safe and has been supported by public health leaders. We cannot afford for our students to lose even more ground and see burgeoning opportunity gaps if more students were to learn at home without a direct medical need.

→ FACT: 9/14/21 DC Data: DCPS Data: 220+ schools + kids 2 weeks of school. 9/14/21 DOH Data: 314 tested notification positive.

I again recognize the stress and anxiety that this unprecedented reopening has caused. I appreciate your valuable feedback on these matters, and I look forward to working with you as we continue to navigate this critical moment for our city.

→ Tired of appreciation. Parents WANT ACTION!

Sincerely,

Paul Kihm

Paul Kihm
Deputy Mayor for Education

→ This is missing the point/Red Herring
NO PARENT wants to widen gaps.
NO PARENT wants their children, families + multi-gen families to be sick or worse
I'm sure you don't believe DME + Mayor delivered NO learning all last year in virtual.

But we know this year you are ok w/
NO learning if sick/compromised
family OR in quarantine.²

None of this adds up.

Only common sense = IPL + Virtual