



# Washington Teachers' Union

*Fighting for the schools DC's community deserves*

1239 Pennsylvania Ave SE • Washington, DC 20003 • 202.517.1477 • [www.wtulocal6.net](http://www.wtulocal6.net)

Dear Candidate,

We invite you to complete the following questionnaire of the Washington Teachers' Union's Committee on Political Education (COPE). This will be used as the first step of our endorsement process which includes a candidate forum, recommendations by our COPE, and vote by our Representative and/or Membership Assembly for final approval.

This questionnaire is part of an expedited process that was approved by our WTU Representative Assembly for the DC Democratic Primary Ward 1 Council and Mayoral races exclusively. We will be engaging in our regularly timed endorsement process for all other races, likely in late January/early February.

#### Key Dates:

- **Questionnaire:** Send the completed questionnaire by **close of business January 2nd, 2026** to [lfuchs@wtulocal6.net](mailto:lfuchs@wtulocal6.net)
- **Forum:** Save the Date for our Candidate Forum for Mayor and Ward 1 DC Council which will be held either in person or virtually (dependent on approval of the Building Use Agreement with DCPS) on **Wednesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 6PM-8PM at Cardozo HS Auditorium**
- **WTU Representative Assembly:** Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM for WTU Members only to vote on endorsement recommendations.

In solidarity,

Laura Fuchs

President, Washington Teachers' Union

#### Candidate Information:

Name: Rashida Brown Position Sought: DC Council - Ward 1

Address: 430 Irving St NW #106, Washington, DC 20010

Email: [rashidaforanc@gmail.com](mailto:rashidaforanc@gmail.com) and [rashida@rashidaforward1.com](mailto:rashida@rashidaforward1.com)

Phone: (202) 903-4561

Are you using the public financing option? (**bold and underline** one) **Yes** / No

#### Notice:

1. The best way to complete this questionnaire:
  - a. Fill it out in Microsoft Word/Google Docs
  - b. Bold and underline any yes or no questions
  - c. Type your responses into the boxes below the question (the space will expand as you proceed)
    - i. Please limit all responses to around 1000 characters
    - ii. Do not use AI or other forms of Chat GPT
  - d. Save it as a PDF with your name in the title.
2. Your questionnaire, in its entirety, will be published on the WTU website and the WTU reserves the right to use responses to any answer, in their entirety, in our campaign materials.
3. Any statement made in this questionnaire that is later contradicted through action or association with “education reform” groups or groups that seek to privatize education such as ElectEd, Strong Schools Now, EdReform Now, and DC Charter School Alliance, will cause the WTU to revisit any endorsement offered and may result in the rescinding of our endorsement.

### **In your own words...**

1. How have you interacted with public schools? Please include any experiences you have advocating for DC public schools, parents or students.

**Yes**, my professional experience at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) as Director of Policy, Planning and Research gave me deep insight into DC's education systems. During this time, I led my team in supporting the implementation of District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) quality and assessment activities within Pre-K settings. In my supervisory role, I worked directly with DCPS to provide oversight, coordination and successful implementation of the District’s mixed delivery Pre-K system. When I was employed at OSSE, I also worked with my team to explore alignment among the DC School Report Card STAR rating, the enhanced Quality Rating and Improvement System and [OSSE and DC PCSB Accountability Systems](#), particularly regarding attendance and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) measures, to promote continuous improvement in educational outcomes for students and uniformity across both DCPS and DC public charter schools.

The goal was to ensure that OSSE administers common tools like the My School DC application system to improve quality, shared standards, and collaborative implementation support so DCPS and other local education agencies operate within a unified framework for access, quality, and accountability. During my time at OSSE, I drafted components of the [District’s 2017 Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) state plan](#) to hold us accountable as a city as part of our federal-state partnership.

I co-authored and published the [Pre-K report](#) for the District of Columbia, an annual report on the state of Pre-K describing how the District has supported rigorous efforts to ensure that all three- and four-year olds have access to high quality early learning in DCPS, community-based organizations and charter school settings. While at OSSE, I've personally supported parents navigating enrollment challenges, special education services, and language access barriers.

As ANC Commissioner for 10 years, I advocated for school facilities expansion and improvement projects for our neighborhood DCPS schools and demanded equitable resource allocation, particularly through the uniform per student funding formula (UPSFF). And as an active member and Chair of the District of Columbia’s Citizens Review Panel, I worked with CFSA and OSSE

directors to advise on the successful implementation of the educational requirements under the Fostering Connections for Increasing Adoptions Act. While employed as a senior policy associate at the American Public Human Services Association, I also worked with Senator Al Franken's office to draft and successfully pass the [legislative amendment](#) that DC is now implementing.

2. What is the top priority facing public education in the District of Columbia, and how will you address it if you are elected?

**Teacher retention and fair compensation:** DC loses 20% of teachers annually, with rates even higher in Ward 1, 7, and 8 schools. This turnover devastates student learning, destroys school culture, and disproportionately harms Black and brown students who need stable, experienced educators most.

As DC Councilmember, I'll advocate for salary increases of up to 15% for public school teachers, with additional retention bonuses for those working in high-need schools. Additional pay for teachers is needed while working in high need schools and NOT merit-based pay - which is proven to be ineffective and emanating from a broken teacher evaluation system. Beyond compensation, I'll address working conditions such as guaranteed and protected planning time, smaller class sizes, adequate supplies, and professional autonomy. I am aware of WTU's grievances with DCPS not honoring its contract around planning time. This leads to additional educator burden and burnout. We need a functional relationship between WTU and DCPS and accountability for DCPS when principals or DCPS itself directly violates contractual obligations.

Additionally, I'll champion dedicated workforce housing for educators, especially in Ward 1, I will champion housing policies that lead to more affordable homes and meeting our citywide goals. As DC Councilmember, I'd like to start with the Park Morton's Redevelopment at Bruce Monroe project, a development project I championed within my single member district. As ANC, I advocated for workforce housing to be included in the project and as DC Councilmember, I would like to prioritize some affordable units specifically set aside for teachers.

I'll also ensure DCPS implements the Council-mandated immigrant educator green card program affecting over 100 teachers, recognizing that many of them are educators in Ward 1's dual-language schools. This is particularly the case at Columbia Heights Educational Campus (CHCE), Oyster, Cardozo, and other Ward 1 schools.

As a government leader and social worker, I understand both policy mechanics and classroom realities. As a DC Councilmember, WTU will have a true partner in me — one who recognizes that without teachers, there is no education system.

3. How have you worked with WTU in the past? How will you improve that in the future?

While I haven't had formal partnership opportunities with WTU in my previous roles, I've closely followed your advocacy and testimony at Council hearings and State Board of Education (SBOE) public meetings on various topics impacting our educators and DC's education system. Consequently, I've learned the District's challenges with understaffed schools, limited resources, and the disrespect shown when DCPS ignores Council mandates, SBOE recommendations and WTU contractual obligations.

As DC Councilmember, WTU will have direct access to my office. I'll include teacher voice in education legislation from drafting stage to final passage, and use my oversight powers to hold DCPS accountable for commitments made to educators. When WTU testifies, you'll find a Councilmember who doesn't just listen but acts—using budget authority and public pressure to deliver results.

My OSSE experience means I understand education policy mechanics and will take this knowledge and skills with me to the Wilson building. My commitment to workers' rights means teachers will have a true ally on Council.

## Funding Public Schools

4. Do you believe the current process for how schools funding decisions are made is working adequately?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the Student-Based versus Comprehensive Staffing funding models as well as the role of the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT).
- If you believe it is not adequate, what would you do differently if elected?

**No** - the current student funding mechanism is failing our students. I believe the per-pupil funding model creates perverse incentives for enrollment competition rather than collaboration. In the District of Columbia, we are still facing the looming issue of having underfunded schools serving our highest-need students. Small schools and those with declining enrollment face budget spirals, losing critical staff despite student needs being a remaining constant. Even though high-needs schools receive additional weight in the funding formula, it's fundamentally inadequate and not truly equitable.

For instance, the current weights don't reflect true costs of educating students experiencing trauma, homelessness, or learning English. That doesn't come close to covering the actual costs of trauma-informed care, social workers, smaller class sizes, and intensive interventions these students need. High-poverty schools face higher teacher turnover, requiring constant recruitment/training costs. They need more family engagement resources, translation services, and wraparound supports - none adequately covered by the marginal weight increases.

As a DC Councilmember, I will push for data-driven weights that fully fund actual needs. As we study our current financing structure, I would also explore a hybrid model that layers student-based funding on top to fully resource additional needs and factors in the cost of implementing a comprehensive, holistic approach for every school to have the following baseline positions (i.e., nurses, librarians, school counselors, social workers, art/music teachers) regardless of enrollment. Moreover, I think we should explore decreasing the classroom ratios for ELL and SPED from 17:1 to the previous comprehensive staffing model of 13:1.

Additionally, I would explore a biennial year budget to avoid annual disruption and promote school stability and equity, like our neighbors in Virginia. This could allow schools to plan

strategically and proactively using budget projections informed by data rather than reacting to crises. My OSSE experience with implementing education programs taught me that stable, adequate funding drives better outcomes.

Technically, DCPS policies require principals to consider Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) recommendations and provide rationale for decisions, but there's no strict requirement for formal written responses to each LSAT recommendation. The regulations are vague, stating principals should "collaborate" and "consider input." As a DC Councilmember, I would strengthen LSATs by dedicating public resources to give parents, teachers, and community members a voice in school-level decisions. This can be done by dedicating resources to support LSAT operations including allowable expenses for staffing support, independent analysis, training, and child care and food during meetings. Moreover, I would require DCPS to participate in LSAT meetings to hear recommendations from LSATs and provide a written response and updates that would be included in the LSAT's public minutes to increase accountability and transparency. This model is similar to the District's Citizen's Review Panel for CFSA which is a mandate under the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which I served as Chair for several years.

5. Do you believe DCPS is adequately following DC Council laws, directives, and transparency requirements when it comes to the funding of our public schools?

Yes / No

What is your philosophy around how schools should be funded to ensure funding equity across all 8 wards and ensure DCPS follows the laws?

**No**, our K-12 schools face chronic underfunding, destabilizing teacher turnover, and massive resource disparities between Ward 3 schools and the rest of DC. This inequality denies Black and brown students the education they deserve while driving experienced educators from the profession.

In addition to the alternative financing model I proposed in #4, I'll push for a weighted funding formula that actually accounts for the true costs of educating students experiencing poverty, trauma, and housing instability. Schools in Wards 1, 7, and 8 need more resources to level the playing field.

For example, a school with 300 students still needs a librarian, nurse, and counselor just like a school with 600 students. But under per-pupil funding, the smaller schools (often in high-poverty areas with declining enrollment) can't afford these positions. Moreover, high-poverty schools face higher teacher turnover, requiring increased recruitment, professional development and training costs. They also need more family engagement resources, translation services, and wraparound supports - none adequately covered by the marginal weight increases. To address the issue, we could push for greater transparency in DCPS's budget process as this has been a chronic issue for decades. I think as a city we need to learn which services are essential central services for DCPS and which services/programs need to be protected at the school level.

As DC Councilmember, I would factor staffing costs regardless of enrollment, leverage actual

cost studies when considering heightened weights for high-needs students, stable funding to prevent year-to-year disruption, and investments in school facilities, technology, and resources comparable to Ward 3 schools.

If elected, what will your role be and how will you ensure that all students, especially those with special needs and English Language Learners, are receiving the services they need to succeed academically and socially in school?

Drawing from my OSSE experience, I know the gap between policy and classroom reality - teachers in our neighborhood schools like Tubman and Roosevelt shouldn't have to choose between meeting IEP requirements and teaching their full class. Currently, 17% of DC students have disabilities and 12% are English learners, yet OSSE reports show only 23% of students with IEPs meet reading proficiency standards, compared to 37% overall. In Ward 1 schools like Marie Reed, CHEC and Cardozo, where over 40% of students are multilingual learners, teachers report inadequate support staff and materials.

As DC Councilmember, I'll fight to increase resources for inclusive classrooms and to recruit and retain bi and multilingual educators teaching ELL students and support for ELL families to ensure they have the necessary support to fully engage in their children's education. We need to build a more robust pipeline for ELL specialists and increase paid training opportunities for teachers. I also propose reducing classroom ratios for ELL and SPED as mentioned in Q4 so teachers and students are fully supported.

I've known firsthand that families often wait months for speech therapy or receive ELL services. As DC Councilmember, I'll take a community-based approach by supporting school-based parent advocates who speak families' languages, not just central office positions. I'll also explore para-educator certification pipelines for teachers who reflect our students' linguistic diversity.

Additionally, I'd like to leverage my oversight authority and collaboration with OSSE to ensure that all general education teachers are trained sufficiently with robust enough skills to reach all students.

6. Do you believe that DCPS has struck a good balance between spending on our schools versus spending on and through central office?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please include your thoughts on the role of DCPS central office including but not limited to its role in funding a DCPS technology plan and unfunded mandates.
- If you answered no, what would you do differently if elected?

**No.** DCPS FY 24 operating budget dedicated about \$36.1 million annually on central office operations while schools struggle with basic needs. DCPS continues to grow and historically present higher counts of central office positions yet teachers still buy supplies with personal funds and schools lack adequate technology infrastructure. While central office has seen budget

cuts particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, I would leverage my budgetary authority as DC Councilmember to explore funding disparities between central office operations and school funding allocations to address inequities.

For example, in Ward 1, Cardozo waited three years for promised computer lab updates while central office added layers of compliance positions. This example highlights the existing disparities and broader district technology challenges, including delays and unequal access to up-to-date devices and support, reflecting longstanding issues with inventory management and resource distribution in DCPS. The technology plan remains chronically underfunded at the school level - students at Roosevelt share outdated Chromebooks while central creates new data systems that teachers report don't improve instruction.

Moreover, unfunded mandates around curriculum changes and assessment systems drain school budgets without corresponding support, forcing principals to cut enrichment programs to meet central requirements. If DCPS central office mandates new curricula, I'll support increased funding for training and materials to fulfill these requirements and needs. Technology spending must flow through schools, not central contracts that don't meet classroom needs. Schools need IT specialists on-site, not downtown. Our schools deserve resources in their buildings, not bureaucracy at 1200 First Street.

7. Do you believe that DCPS is adequately supported to deal with the high rates of mid-year student mobility (where students enroll throughout the school year)?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered no, how would you suggest changing the funding structure to better support DCPS schools?

**No.** DCPS's funding model based on October enrollment audits fails schools experiencing high mid-year mobility. Ward 1 schools see significant student turnover after the count, particularly affecting housing-unstable families in Columbia Heights and Shaw. When schools receive new students in January but no additional funding until the next fiscal year, teachers face larger classes without resources, counselors carry impossible caseloads, and schools can't hire needed staff.

DCPS's funding model based on October enrollment audits fails schools experiencing high mid-year mobility. The current system addressing our mobility issue perversely incentivises schools serving our most vulnerable populations. For example, schools with high percentages of immigrant families and students in temporary housing, absorb new arrivals all year while their budgets remain frozen. This is particularly the case for schools in Ward 1 with high rates of gentrification and student mobility. Teachers describe splitting textbooks, cutting intervention programs, and eliminating field trips to stretch dollars. Meanwhile, schools lose funding immediately when students leave after October, creating a downward spiral where mobility breeds instability.

As DC Councilmember, I would explore a "mobility stabilization fund" using a data-driven approach that supports a rolling average budget, protecting against sudden drops while

ensuring capacity and support for new students. For instance, schools with over 15% mobility rates should receive additional weighted funding for wraparound services. We can do this while addressing systemic root causes such as our affordable housing and housing crises, preventing the displacement driving this educational disruption. Our schools can't build strong communities when their budgets ignore the students actually in their classrooms.

Based on OSSE's mobility data, schools with mobility rates above 15% are typically categorized as "high mobility" schools. The 15% threshold also aligns with research showing that once student turnover exceeds 15%, it significantly impacts classroom continuity, school culture, and achievement for both mobile and stable students. Some districts use 10%, others use 20% - but 15% represents a middle ground where additional support becomes critical.

## District Educators

8. Do you believe that DCPS has a problem with high teacher turnover?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered yes, what would you promote and do to reduce teacher turnover?
- If you answered no, what do you believe is keeping turnover at acceptable levels?

Teacher turnover is continuously devastating school communities. As DC Councilmember, I'll explore financing mechanisms that increase compensation and effective retention tools for the District of Columbia. This includes bonuses and salary increases for teachers in special education and high-need schools, expand affordable workforce housing for educators, paid and protected planning time, and ensure DCPS follows through on Council mandates like the immigrant educator green card program WTU has fought for. Teachers who commit to our highest-need schools deserve compensation that reflects that commitment.

Moreover, teacher retention has been a looming issue in DCPS, especially with early career teachers. Yet, it's even worse in the charter sector. We need a whole city plan to adequately support new teachers, address retention and create a talent pipeline. The SBOE is working on guidelines and recommendations. As DC Councilmember, I would work collaboratively with the SBOE and Council Chair to implement these recommendations upon its release, including networking opportunities and paid mentors for new teachers and other retention tools.

I also support [SBOE's recommendation](#) for research, potentially in the form of a survey or other qualitative research project, would be helpful to better understand the mechanisms by which teacher turnover affects students and schools.

9. Do you believe that DCPS has negotiated in good faith and secured strong contracts with WTU on the last four contracts under Mayoral Control?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered no, what would you do differently to ensure that they are stronger and negotiated in good faith moving forward?

**No.** DCPS routinely violates the WTU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), undermining educator effectiveness and student learning. Teachers across Ward 1 schools report consistent violations that go unaddressed despite grievances. Based on what I've heard from our educators, we need the following:

**Teacher-Assessed Student (TAS) Goals:** WTU has made clear proposals regarding IMPACT and teacher-assessed goals that reflect its broader position on teacher evaluation and support, including elements tied to TAS goals. I'd support WTU's [proposal](#) to revise the IMPACT evaluation system (including how TAS goals factor into teacher ratings) to be negotiated collaboratively with educators, less punitive, and more supportive of teacher growth and retention.

**Protected planning time:** The CBA guarantees elementary teachers 4 hours weekly and secondary teachers one period daily. Yet teachers at Cardozo and Roosevelt describe losing planning time to cover absent colleagues' classes without compensation. At Bruce Monroe, teachers report using planning periods for mandatory meetings rather than instructional preparation.

**Class sizes:** The CBA sets limits (20 for K-2, 25 for 3-5, varying by subject for secondary), but overcrowding is chronic. Marie Reed teachers report about 30 students in primary grades. When schools exceed limits, they're supposed to provide additional compensation or support - this rarely happens.

**School culture/climate:** The CBA requires collaborative decision-making through LSAT and personnel committees. Many schools bypass these structures, making unilateral decisions about schedules, professional development, and discipline policies without required educator input.

As DC Councilmember, I'll use oversight hearings to review violation data and hold DCPS leadership accountable for systemic non-compliance.

10. Do you believe that the WTU should be able to negotiate our evaluation system and will you agree to do everything in your power to repeal DC Code 1-617.18 so that we can?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

**Yes.** IMPACT is fundamentally broken and driving our best educators out of DC classrooms. As someone who worked at OSSE implementing policy, I've seen how this punitive system fails to capture what makes great teaching - the relationships, the culturally responsive practices, the ability to effectively reach our children. Survey after survey confirms IMPACT is the leading cause of DC's devastating teacher turnover, with educators fleeing to Montgomery and Fairfax counties where they're treated as professionals. The system gives undue weight to test scores, punishing teachers in high-poverty schools where students face housing instability, food insecurity, and trauma. For instance, a teacher at Marie Reed working with newly arrived

immigrant students gets evaluated the same as one at a selective enrollment school - that's not accountability, it's inequity.

AFT President Randi Weingarten called it correctly - IMPACT is a relic of Michelle Rhee's failed reforms from nearly two decades ago, designed to fire teachers rather than support them. The 2021 American University study proved what teachers have been saying: "IMPACT doesn't improve instruction or student outcomes. It creates a climate of fear where teachers teach to the test instead of teaching the whole child." WTU has been stripped of the right to negotiate this crucial working condition since the 2007 "reform" law, leaving educators voiceless in their own evaluation. This isn't about avoiding accountability - it's about creating fair, collaborative systems that actually improve teaching and learning.

I will support legislation to repeal the prohibition in DC Code 1-617.18, restoring WTU's right to negotiate evaluation systems. Teachers deserve a voice in how they're assessed, just like every other unionized profession. I'll use oversight hearings to expose IMPACT's discriminatory impacts on Black educators and high-poverty schools. Working with WTU, we'll develop an evaluation system that values growth over punishment, collaboration over competition, and recognizes the complex work of teaching our most vulnerable students. Our children need experienced, supported teachers - not a revolving door caused by an unjust evaluation system.

11. Do you believe that DCPS has an adequate teacher pipeline?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the following:
  - paraprofessional to teacher pipelines,
  - international educator work visas,
  - and teacher mentorship programs (or lack thereof).
- If you answered no, what do you believe should be different and how would you help the WTU win those changes?

**No.** DCPS continuously faces a critical teacher shortage annually, particularly in special education, STEM, and bilingual education. According to [EmpowerED](#) and [WTU](#), D.C. already had the highest teacher turnover rate in the country, with 25-30 percent of educators leaving their schools each year.

The current pipeline programs are fragmented and underfunded. While DCPS has attempted para-to-teacher programs, they lack paid training time and tuition coverage. International educator visa processing is slow and expensive, losing talented teachers to other districts. While DC provides some induction and coaching support, early-career teacher turnover remains high, with roughly half of first-year teachers no longer teaching in DC public schools within five years, underscoring ongoing challenges in consistency and effectiveness of mentorship.

Drawing from my early childhood workforce development experience and aligning with WTU, EmpowerEd, and Fair Budget Coalition priorities, I'll champion comprehensive solutions. In

addition to supporting our teacher pipeline, I will also support fully-funded para-educator pipelines proposing full tuition coverage at UDC, paid student teaching, and guaranteed placement - following what DCFPI research shows works: removing financial barriers. I'll streamline international educator visa sponsorship through a centralized office, covering fees and expediting processing. Every new teacher needs a trained mentor with reduced teaching loads and stipends, as WTU has long advocated. I'll model the work we did at OSSE providing child care providers with similar resources as part of MyChildCareDC.

With my focus on career pathways, I will partner OSSE and DCPS, HBCUs like Howard University and the University of the District of Columbia, WTU, and community-based organizations to [fully fund existing programs](#) and offer housing assistance, student loan forgiveness, and retention bonuses for high-need schools and support for paraprofessionals, teachers aides and dedicated aides. These aren't costs - they're investments that pay dividends through teacher stability and student achievement.

12. DCPS has possibly over 300 educators working on an H1B visa and would likely be forced to leave the country upon their expiration after a maximum of 6 years. Do you support DCPS continuing a program to provide an opportunity for H1B Visa Holders to get an employer sponsored Green Card through DCPS?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered yes, how will you help the WTU win back this program?

DCPS has refused to act on Council-mandated funds to support immigrant educators and their path to a green card. I will hold DCPS accountable for fulfilling this mandate—and I will be proactive and public about it.

DCPS previously operated a program to sponsor green cards for immigrant educators, then cut the program in the FY26 budget. The Council restored the funding, making clear its intent that the program continue. Despite this, DCPS is refusing to implement the program, undermining the Council's authority and harming educators and students. These educators are essential to culturally responsive education, language access, and student success—and DCPS's inaction threatens stability in classrooms that already face staffing challenges.

**As a Councilmember,** I will hold DCPS accountable by:

- Using the Council's oversight authority to demand clear timelines, documentation, and compliance with the restored funding and legislative intent.
- Calling public oversight hearings and requiring testimony from DCPS leadership on why the program has not been implemented.
- Leveraging the budget and performance process to ensure funds are spent as mandated and tied to measurable outcomes.
- Standing with impacted educators and WTU to elevate their voices and document the harm caused by DCPS's refusal to act.
- Working with the new Mayor, since DCPS and the Chancellor report directly to the Mayor, to

ensure executive follow-through and alignment with the Council's directive.

Council-mandated funds are not optional. When an agency ignores the law, it weakens democracy and hurts our communities. I am committed to making sure DCPS follows through, because supporting immigrant educators means supporting our students, our schools, and our values.

## Working and Learning Conditions

13. Do you believe that DCPS is fully enforcing the WTU Collective Bargaining Agreement?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address issues that you believe are most important to ensure are enforced in the WTU CBA such as planning time, class sizes and school culture and climate.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for our educators in all 8 wards of DC?

**No.** DCPS routinely violates the WTU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), undermining educator effectiveness and student learning. Teachers across Ward 1 schools report consistent violations that go unaddressed despite grievances. Based on what I've heard from our educators, we need the following:

**Teacher-Assessed Student (TAS) Goals:** WTU has made clear proposals regarding IMPACT and teacher-assessed goals that reflect its broader position on teacher evaluation and support, including elements tied to TAS goals. I'd support WTU's [proposal](#) to revise the IMPACT evaluation system (including how TAS goals factor into teacher ratings) to be negotiated collaboratively with educators, less punitive, and more supportive of teacher growth and retention.

**Protected planning time:** The CBA guarantees elementary teachers 4 hours weekly and secondary teachers one period daily. Yet teachers at Cardozo and Roosevelt describe losing planning time to cover absent colleagues' classes without compensation. At Bruce Monroe, teachers report using planning periods for mandatory meetings rather than instructional preparation.

**Class sizes:** The CBA sets limits (20 for K-2, 25 for 3-5, varying by subject for secondary), but overcrowding is chronic. Marie Reed teachers report about 30 students in primary grades. When schools exceed limits, they're supposed to provide additional compensation or support - this rarely happens.

**School culture/climate:** The CBA requires collaborative decision-making through LSAT and personnel committees. Many schools bypass these structures, making unilateral decisions about schedules, professional development, and discipline policies without required educator input.

As DC Councilmember, I'll use oversight hearings to review violation data and hold DCPS leadership accountable for systemic non-compliance.

14. Do you believe that our schools are being adequately *and equitably* modernized and maintained?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address DGS role in this process and your role in ensuring they are doing their job in a high quality, timely and transparent manner.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for school communities in all 8 wards of DC?

**No**, DC's school modernization and maintenance system is fundamentally inequitable, with resources flowing to politically connected communities while high-need schools wait decades for basic repairs. The PACE methodology used to prioritize schools considers Facility Condition Index scores measuring repair costs versus replacement value, but implementation doesn't always follow these objective criteria.

While the timeliness modernization projects and maintenance has gotten significantly better since the council established the system that rates the facilities and ranks them, I'd like to use my oversight authority as DC Councilmember to continuously review and assess progress and make adjustments when needed in the new council period.

15. Do you believe that all students are able to safely and quickly get to school?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address:
  - OSSE DOT,
  - Safe Passage,
  - increased Federal Presence,
  - and public transportation options.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for school communities in all 8 wards of DC and for our immigrant students in particular?

**No**. Black and Brown children in our city face disproportionate safety challenges traveling to school, navigating gun violence and gang activity that concentrates around our most vulnerable communities. While OSSE's Safe Passage program provides critical support with crossing guards and safe routes, they cannot address these systemic issues alone. This requires true partnership between OSSE, ONSE, DDOT, MPD, and community organizations to create comprehensive safety networks around our schools.

This isn't a problem we can solve in isolation - it requires examining the entire ecosystem affecting our children's safety. When students at Cardozo and Roosevelt face open-air drug markets, when elementary children witness violence walking to school, when immigrant families navigate unsafe routes without language support, we see systemic failures demanding systemic solutions. Moreover, with increased federal presence on the rise, Safe Passage teams must be

adequately trained to provide a safe passage for our immigrant families to accompany their children in and out of school without trauma and without fear. No child should miss school or arrive late because they feel unsafe on DC streets.

I'll expand Safe Passage with community-hired parents who know neighborhood dynamics, provide free Metro passes for all students regardless of distance, fund walking school buses with paid parent leaders, and ensure crossing guards at every dangerous intersection. But critically, we must address root causes through violence interrupters, mental health crisis teams, and addiction services along school routes. We can also explore best practices from other cities who face similar threats of ICE raids at schools to ensure our children and families' protection and safety. Every child deserves to walk to school without fear.

Moreover, the Safe Passage program needs to be separated from the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice (DMPSJ) and shifted to the Office of the Attorney General and run by CBOs who are government funded but independently run — one to manage training and a coalition that staffs it. If Safe Passage is in the same department as policing, it's not going to be a violence interruption approach and at this moment, I don't think the community trusts a Safe Passage program within the police infrastructure. Using a CBO approach, Safe Passages can be supported by a community of coalitions and CBOs who have greater access to diverse professional development and training opportunities and join other partners who leverage promising approaches for prevention at scale.

16. Do you believe that DCPS has adequate access to school nurses in all our schools?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for school communities in all 8 wards of DC?

**No.** It has been long reported that DCPS and public charter schools face significant workforce shortages due to noncompetitive salaries, causing many nurses to leave for higher-paying positions in hospitals, nursing homes, and other districts. DC's SBOE passed a [resolution](#) advocating for enhanced school nurse staffing and support for DCPS to fill these gaps.

While working at the Deputy Mayor's office for Health and Human Services, I followed arguments and testimony regarding the School Health Services Amendment Act requiring a nurse in every DCPS school. The Council passed this in 2016, but implementation remains inadequate. Current law mandates one nurse per school, yet many schools share nurses or rely on health techs without RN credentials. I believe we should revisit this law, assess and explore the current needs and properly invest in the resources that matter and match today's school demands.

For instance, on average, Ward 1 schools such as Bruce Monroe see nurses 2-3 days weekly. Students with diabetes, severe allergies, and chronic conditions need daily medical support. Health techs can't administer certain medications or perform complex procedures, leaving gaps that force parents to leave work or students to miss instruction. As DC Councilmember, I would explore resources retaining and recruiting additional school health professionals that could administer medications and support our children's health needs while in school. Through my career pathways initiative, I'll explore higher education partnerships to enhance and help fill gaps

in our workforce pipeline the nation's nursing shortage by supporting funding for tuition assistance for DC residents pursuing school nursing.

Through oversight, I'll track nurse vacancy rates monthly and require DOH/DCPS coordination reports and push the health committee to explore these issues more deeply. No child should wait for insulin or emergency medication because their nurse covers three schools. Our students' health can't be a part-time commitment.

## Governance

17. Do you believe DC's current system of Mayoral Control of DCPS is adequately and equitably serving all our students?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the governance of OSSE and the oversight and selection of the Chancellor of DCPS.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and how will you advocate to change it?

**No**, I do not believe DC's current system of Mayoral Control of DCPS is adequately and equitably serving all our students. I am committed to meaningful governance changes that restore democratic voice and make our education system accountable to teachers, students, and parents. For too long, mayoral control has centralized power, limited transparency, and sidelined the people most affected by education decisions. I support reforms that share power, strengthen oversight, and elevate community voice. Moreover, the Chancellor selection lacks meaningful community input, and OSSE operates too independently from actual school needs.

Despite promises, we still see stark disparities in our education system. As someone who led OSSE policy implementation, I've seen how disconnected central decision-making becomes from classroom realities. The current structure concentrates power without sufficient accountability mechanisms or parent voice.

The SBOE has just sent legislation to the Chairman giving them critical but small new authorities: the power to get agencies to initiate policy, the power to amend policies that come to them from OSSE (that they can currently only vote to approve or deny), "great weight" and access to data. CM Zachary Parker has introduced similar legislation. As DC Councilmember, I would support this legislation, recognizing that this is only a first step but doesn't go far enough.

**As DC Councilmember, here's what I propose:**

- **An elected school board** with budget authorities and key powers and responsibilities over our Chancellor selection, ensuring communities shape their schools' futures.
- **Ward-based education councils** with binding input on school decisions, not advisory roles.
- **Chancellor selection reform** requiring public forums and community scoring of candidates
- **OSSE realignment** to serve schools, not operate above them - with performance metrics tied to equity outcomes

- **Equitable governance across sectors** by applying consistent accountability standards to DCPS and charter schools so families receive transparency and fairness regardless of school type

I'll also advocate through:

- Legislation requiring participatory budgeting for school funding
- Charter amendments establishing an elected board
- Coalition building with parent groups who've been fighting this fight
- Using Council oversight to expose inequitable resource distribution

We can't keep accepting a system where your zip code determines your educational quality. Real change requires shifting power back to communities. Our education system works best when those closest to students help shape the decisions. I am committed to governance reforms that make that principle real.

18. Do you believe that the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) is adequately overseeing and ensuring transparency for DC Public Charter Schools?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the appointment of PCSB members and the parity between what DCPS and DC Public Charter Schools have to report, including FOIA, and the policies they have to follow.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and how will you fight to change it?

I believe PCSB lacks adequate oversight and transparency. Charter schools educate 47% of DC students and half of the students in Ward 1, yet operate with less accountability than DCPS. I'd like to see shared accountability and transparency across these sectors. As DC Councilmember, I would push aligned standards and processes for the following:

- **FOIA compliance** to avoid interpretation inconsistencies and standardize processes and enforcement across all publicly-funded schools.
- **Diverse composition** considering geographic (i.e. ward-based) representation, parents and teachers to be more inclusive of community voice.
- **Same requirements for** open meeting, budget disclosure, and discipline reporting rules for both sectors.
- **Strengthen oversight standards regarding** annual audits of charter management organizations' fees and real estate deals involving public funding.

With a new Mayor and shifts in DC Council seats, we may have the political will to collectively push and require more transparency and accountability in both DCPS and PCSs. Our city deserves new, progressive leadership who will push for education reform.

I'll build coalitions with parent advocates from both sectors who want accountability. Using Council oversight hearings, I'll also address parity and expose inequities in transparency requirements. Public education means public accountability, which promotes strong governance.

19. Do you believe that DC has an adequate plan for public education that ensures a strong neighborhood public school system for all eight wards?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address your thoughts and philosophy on what a “strong” school is, and decisions around opening and closing schools in both DCPS and DCPCS, including a moratorium on charter openings.
- Include a description of what the process would look like.

**No.** DC lacks a coherent plan ensuring strong neighborhood schools across all wards. I believe what makes a "strong" school is experienced teachers with access to professional development, paid planning time and well-being support, wraparound services, school counselors, social workers, librarians, active parent engagement, limited turnover, enrichment programs, modern facilities, engaged students in high-quality learning environments and close proximity to home.

While I believe in community-based decisionmaking on opening and closing schools in both DCPS and DCPCS. Right now, about half of W1 students attend public charter schools. As Ward 1 Representative on the DC Council, my focus will be on strengthening DCPS and making our neighborhood schools are equitably resourced and accessible to all.

20. Will you support an update to the 2007 PERRA and 2010 Local Hatch Act that allows individuals employed by DC Public Schools to run for partisan public offices (including DC Council, Mayor and Attorney General)?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

**Yes.** DC teachers and school staff deserve the same democratic rights as other DC government employees and residents to run for partisan office. The current prohibition creates an unfair barrier that silences the very voices we need in elected positions - those who understand our schools from the inside.

Teachers are experts and can provide unique insights into how Council decisions impact classrooms. In Ward 1, a Cardozo teacher who sees daily how budget cuts affect special education shouldn't have to choose between their career and advocating for systemic change through elected office. Ward 1 schools like Tubman and Marie Reed would benefit from having educators who've walked their halls representing them on Council.

An updated law should include clear guardrails: candidates must take unpaid leave during active campaigning and must recuse themselves from votes directly affecting their employer if elected. Other jurisdictions successfully balance these interests - Maryland allows teachers to serve in their legislature for example. While the DC Council already made this change to allow educators to run for SBOE in addition to ANC, they should also be able to run for DC Council, Mayor, AG while teaching.

Our democracy is stronger when those closest to our challenges can run for office. As a social worker and someone who's worked in education, I know how valuable practitioner perspectives are in policymaking. Teachers shouldn't have to sacrifice their profession to serve their community in elected office.