Long Legacy of Struggles for Quality, Equity and Citizen Control

REMEMBERING OUR HISTORY TO MAKE A BETTER FUTURE
Education has been Important and Inequitable for a long time

- In 1804 when the District had only a few thousand residents, a school board was established with Thomas Jefferson as President of the School Board. These schools were only for white children.
- The first black school was started in 1807 by freed slaves and was privately funded.
Desegregation: White families left, Black families arrived

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut</th>
<th>Asian and Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Other race</th>
<th>Hispanic origin (of any race)</th>
<th>White, not of Hispanic origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>606,900</td>
<td>179,667</td>
<td>399,604</td>
<td>1,466</td>
<td>11,214</td>
<td>14,949</td>
<td>32,710</td>
<td>166,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>638,333</td>
<td>171,768</td>
<td>448,906</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>6,636</td>
<td>9,992</td>
<td>17,679</td>
<td>164,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>756,510</td>
<td>209,272</td>
<td>537,712</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>5,372</td>
<td>3,198</td>
<td>15,671</td>
<td>200,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1960</strong></td>
<td>763,956</td>
<td><strong>345,263</strong></td>
<td><strong>411,737</strong></td>
<td>587</td>
<td>4,690</td>
<td>1,679</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1950</strong></td>
<td><strong>802,178</strong></td>
<td><strong>517,865</strong></td>
<td><strong>280,803</strong></td>
<td>330</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>663,091</td>
<td>474,326</td>
<td>187,266</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>473,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>486,869</td>
<td>353,981</td>
<td>132,068</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>437,571</td>
<td>326,860</td>
<td>109,966</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>331,069</td>
<td>236,128</td>
<td>94,446</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>278,718</td>
<td>191,532</td>
<td>86,702</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>230,392</td>
<td>154,695</td>
<td>75,572</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>177,624</td>
<td>118,006</td>
<td>59,596</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Black**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Free</th>
<th>Slave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>131,700</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>75,080</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>51,687</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>33,745</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>30,261</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>23,336</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>15,471</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>8,144</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
<td>(NA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advocacy for Equity, Quality and Civic Control

- **1967**: Court challenge of ability tracking – Hobson v. Hanson – ruled that ability grouping denies equal opportunity.

- **1968**: Congress establishes elected Board of Education; 53 candidates run (supported by the Washington Post)

- **1971**: Special Education: Mills v. Board – DC must provide appropriate education to special needs students; and due process for students being suspended or expelled.

- **1976**: Board of Education established Advisory Neighborhood School Councils to increase local control of public schools.

- **1989**: Parents United v. District of Columbia, challenging the city because of fire code violations in the public school buildings.
After Empowerment of 1960s and 1970s, Loss of Civic Power

- 1995 – Congress established DC Public Charter School Board
- 1996 – Congressionally mandated Control Board tried to eliminate elected board of education with an Emergency Board of Trustees for DCPS, fired Superintendent and hired General Becton
- 2003 – Council created hybrid elected/appointed Board of Education
- 2007 – Council Abolished Elected Board of Education and Established Mayoral Control
WHERE WE ARE NOW?

The District of Columbia: A Fork in the Road
Little Public Role or Accountability

- No Policy Board for DCPS
- No oversight board of DCPS administration
- No ombudsman for public school parents or citizens

- Mayor
- Council Oversight, Budget, Contracts > $1 M
- DCPS LEA, Chancellor
- Deputy Mayor for Education
- State Superintendent
- 120 DCPS Schools
- 45,000 Students
- 2011-12
- $811 Million FY2013 Operating Budget Request
- $1.7 Billion FY2013-18 Capital Budget Request
- Elected State Board of Education, Advisory
According to the Washington Post:

Public input on public schools should be limited to once every 4 years, on one question.

- “Mayor Vincent C. Gray (D) needs to push back against council interference before school officials lose the authority to make student needs, not political interests, their priority.”

- “Such meddling prompted the District to abolish its school board in 2007”

- “Authority for running the public school system was given to the mayor, who would also be held accountable for the results.”

  • Washington Post Editorial, March 27, 2012
Even Less Public Role or Accountability in Public Charter Schools

- 57 Public Charter School Local Education Agencies (LEAs)—the same standing as a public school district/gets federal and local funds
- 31,000 students in DC public charter schools
- FY2013 budget $542 million of public funds
- Governed by 57 Private Non-Profit Boards of Directors
### Lots of Change…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category</strong></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools</strong></td>
<td>Since 2006, 29 DCPS schools have closed. About 16 new charter LEAs opened and about 16 public charter LEAs were closed since 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td>In DCPS, almost 50% of the teachers hired from 2002-2009 left DCPS after two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principals</strong></td>
<td>32% of DCPS schools had 3 or more principals from 2008-2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>The school year starting after the Mayoral takeover, DCPS lost nearly 7% of its enrollment (up from 4% the year before). The year after the Mayor closed 23 schools, enrollment declined by almost 8%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buildings</strong></td>
<td>Since Oyster was replaced in 2001, DC has built or fully modernized 32 DCPS schools. 20 of the 57 public charter LEAs are leasing or own at least one former DCPS school building.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** 21CSF, Mary Levy
Persistent Inequities

- School by school variation—Facilities and Programs
  - Within DCPS Schools
  - Among Charter Schools
  - Between Charter and DCPS Schools
Little to show for it...

In 2011 free/reduced-price school lunch students scored 33 points (on average) lower than full pay students.

This performance gap was wider than that in 2003 (18 points).

In 2011, free/reduced-price school lunch students scored 32 points lower, on average, than full paying students.

This performance gap was wider than that in 2002 (17 points).
Current Challenges

- DC is targeting schools for closure because of single measure of standardized test scores.
IFF Study: “RED” Neighborhoods Targeted for Closures

DCPS School
- Performance Tier 1
- Performance Tier 2
- Performance Tier 3
- Performance Tier 4
- Non-Analysis School

Charter School
- Performance Tier 1
- Performance Tier 2
- Performance Tier 3
- Performance Tier 4
- Non-Analysis School
Instability Threatens DCPS

- Instability—like closings and consolidations—accelerates enrollment loss (as it did with the Mayoral takeover and the year of closings and consolidations) which will mean less funding for DCPS.
Communities Mobilizing

- The persistence of schools with significant student performance challenges reflect the fact that:
  - There are no quick fixes or easy answers.
  - Just having high standards, even with dictatorial powers, doesn’t deliver.
A National Movement Limit Democracy in Public Education

- Nationally—about 16,000 school districts governed by elected boards of education

- A handful of school districts do not elect their boards of education—but entirely urban districts

- Movement to take public education out of the public square
  - Pro business
  - Anti democratic
  - Anti government
  - Anti union