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DCPS Names 13 Catalyst Schools to Launch across the District this Fall

Fenty Administration Continues to Provide More Options for Students and Families

WASHINGTON, DC – Today at Malcolm X Elementary School, Mayor Adrian M. Fenty and Chancellor Michelle Rhee named the 13 District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), selected to transform into theme-based Catalyst Schools. Each school will spend the next year creating plans to refocus their strategic school design and content delivery by adopting one of three themes: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), Arts Integration, and World Cultures.

“As we enter our third year many of the system-wide reforms have taken shape, and we want to continue increasing our focus on meaningful classroom level improvements,” said Mayor Fenty. “The purpose of the DC Catalyst project is to provide compelling options for students and families at their neighborhood schools, so that in every Ward quality and choice becomes a reality.”

To be considered for the DC Catalyst project, schools were required to submit proposals that clearly articulated their vision for how one of the three themes would be integrated into a rigorous instructional program.

“School communities rallied together and put in a tremendous amount of work to create thoughtful proposals that were both innovative and academically sound,” said Chancellor Rhee. “This is one more initiative aimed at broadening our curriculum and demonstrating our commitment to building a vibrant system of schools for District families and educators.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CATALYST SCHOOLS

Whether engaging students’ imaginations through the arts, piquing their curiosity through science or exposing them to new cultures, the curriculum at DC Catalyst Schools will be designed to inspire and motivate students through active learning.

At each DC Catalyst school there will be an intense focus on professional development for teachers through collaboration, leadership training, and co-planning across grades and disciplines. Local experts will provide schools with year-long coaching and summer enrichment, while connections to other DC Catalyst schools will provide frequent opportunities for collaboration across the District.

Adopting a DC Catalyst theme affords a school the chance to build capacity around its distinct core focus. Everything from after-school activities and whole-school projects to parent and community events can be designed around the new theme.

CATALYST THEMES

While adopting a theme is not a new educational tool, DCPS is taking a different approach by keeping all 13 schools comprehensive and not requiring a special admissions process for students.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)

STEM schools will be driven by inquiry-based learning; exploration and scientific discovery will inform how all subjects are taught.

- Instruction will be project-based for all core subjects in order to create classrooms where students are engaged, motivated, and work together to explore while they learn
- Science, math, and elements of design and technology will be integrated into the entire curriculum
- Students will learn skills that enable them to adapt to fast-changing technology
- Educators will encourage students to be leaders in creating and developing the next line of advancements in any field or career

Arts Integration

Arts Integration is an approach to teaching where the visual and performing arts are woven into the classroom as tools for teaching core subject content.

- Schools will incorporate movement, dance, visual arts, music, and other forms of expression into instruction for all subjects
- Instruction will be designed to engage students mentally, physically, and socially -- sparking their creativity and imagination

World Cultures

The World Cultures theme will focus on integrating the core curriculum with exposure to international regions, various cultures, and global issues. Additionally, communication skills will be developed in dedicated foreign language classes.

- Instruction will focus on exploring the ever-increasing diversity and globalization of society from the classroom to the workplace

- The study of world languages and cultures will provide students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are indispensable to becoming a world citizen
- The ultimate goal is for all students to graduate with communicative and intercultural competence in a language other than English

CATALYST SCHOOLS

School communities were notified today of their selection into the DC Catalyst project, and the 2009-2010 school year will serve as a planning year.

STEM Schools	Arts Integration	World Cultures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beers Elementary School, Ward 7</i> • <i>Burroughs Education Campus, Ward 5</i> • <i>Emery Educational Campus, Ward 5</i> • <i>Langdon Education Campus, Ward 5</i> • <i>Malcolm X Elementary School, Ward 8</i> • <i>Whittier Education Campus, Ward 4</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ludlow-Taylor Elementary School, Ward 6</i> • <i>Sousa Middle School, Ward 7</i> • <i>Takoma Educational Center, Ward 4</i> • <i>Tyler Elementary School, Ward 6</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Columbia Heights Education Campus, Ward 1</i> • <i>Eaton Elementary School, Ward 3</i> • <i>Payne Elementary School, Ward 6</i>

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