

**The Duquesne City School District
300 Kennedy Avenue
Duquesne, PA 15110**

**Recovery Plan
Quarterly Progress Report**

October 15, 2019

Purpose

This report updates progress on the Duquesne City School District Recovery Plan, which was issued on February 11, 2013 and implemented on April 2, 2013. Section 672-A(b)(2) of the Public School Code of Pennsylvania requires this report. The period covered is the first quarter of fiscal year 2019 – 2020 – July 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019. The previous quarterly progress report in the series is dated July 15, 2019.

Executive Summary

Several highlights from the first quarter of fiscal year 2019-2020 follow:

- Recovery Plan implementation continued.
- The Duquesne City School District (DCSD) continues to operate pre-kindergarten through sixth grade at the Duquesne Elementary School (DES).
- Operation of DES is planned for the foreseeable future.
- Student enrollment at DES at the end of September is 419, reflecting an increase of 30 students since the end of the last school year. EL enrollment was reported to be 46, an increase of three. See pages 3 and 4.
- Efforts continue to improve curriculum and instruction at DES. See details in the section of this report marked *Education*, which begins on page 3.
- The initial, estimated, year-end financial performance for 2018-19 is a deficit of approximately \$375,000. This would result in a projected total fund balance of \$4,574,342 as of June 30, 2019. A final, audited figure for the June 30, 2019 fund balance should be available in the January report. See page 8.
- Current secondary enrollments of Duquesne resident students at West Mifflin and East Allegheny is 342, 16 more than one year ago. See page 11.
- Annual tuition to be paid by Duquesne for students attending school elsewhere in 2019-2020 is projected to be \$8,980,433, an increase of 5.5% compared to the final estimate of 2018-2019. This can be attributed in part to rate increases and in part to a greater portion of tuition placements related to special education. See page 11.
- Current charter school enrollment in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade is 204, nine less than reported in June, 2019. See page 13.
- Continued efforts are being made to bring students back to Duquesne from charter schools. A new web site was launched and proactive efforts were continued over the summer, including home visits and a variety of mailers.

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- There were no unpaid or contested invoices or debt service obligations during the quarter, and all payroll and benefit expenditures and tuition payments were made in a timely manner.
- A number of personnel changes were implemented for the start of the 2019-20 school year. Some of the changes were approved at the June Receiver Business Meeting and remaining changes were approved/ratified at the August Receiver Business Meeting. (see Page 10)
- The District partnership with the University of Virginia, supported by the PA Department of Education and designed to promote school turnaround, is progressing according to plan.

Supplemental Information

Please see the DCSD website, dukecitysd.org, for an historical summary of the School District's severe financial recovery status, its receivership and criteria for exiting recovery status. Quarterly Recovery Plan Progress Reports are also available there.

Implementation Narrative

Information on Recovery Plan implementation is set forth in the following three sections of this report:

1. Education (page 3)
2. Finance (page 7)
3. Governance and Administration (page 14)

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Education

Enrollment

Historic and current DES enrollments are displayed on the following table. Grade enrollments increased in a majority of levels since previously reported figures for June.

| Duquesne Elementary School | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Student Enrollment | | | | | | | | | |
| September 30, 2019 | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade > | Pre-K | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Total |
| Sep 2015 | 24 | 56 | 48 | 50 | 59 | 39 | 36 | 40 | 352 |
| Dec 2015 | 24 | 59 | 45 | 45 | 62 | 38 | 36 | 40 | 349 |
| Mar 2016 | 27 | 60 | 46 | 45 | 58 | 39 | 36 | 37 | 348 |
| Jun 2016 | 26 | 57 | 48 | 43 | 59 | 41 | 37 | 39 | 350 |
| Sep 2016 | 23 | 50 | 45 | 42 | 35 | 52 | 39 | 34 | 320 |
| Dec 2016 | 26 | 51 | 43 | 41 | 33 | 54 | 42 | 34 | 324 |
| Mar 2017 | 29 | 54 | 44 | 40 | 33 | 58 | 42 | 35 | 335 |
| Jun 2017 | 26 | 53 | 47 | 40 | 34 | 57 | 43 | 36 | 336 |
| Sep 2017 | 29 | 39 | 47 | 46 | 42 | 35 | 52 | 41 | 331 |
| Dec 2017 | 29 | 46 | 51 | 49 | 39 | 40 | 56 | 45 | 355 |
| Mar 2018 | 30 | 48 | 54 | 52 | 42 | 41 | 60 | 46 | 373 |
| Jun 2018 | 30 | 48 | 56 | 53 | 40 | 42 | 58 | 46 | 373 |
| Sep 2018 | 32 | 60 | 45 | 44 | 53 | 38 | 37 | 59 | 368 |
| Dec 2018 | 31 | 58 | 43 | 47 | 52 | 35 | 37 | 60 | 363 |
| Mar 2019 | 30 | 58 | 53 | 54 | 58 | 39 | 43 | 55 | 390 |
| June 2019 | 30 | 58 | 54 | 53 | 58 | 39 | 42 | 55 | 389 |
| Sep 2019 | 41 | 62 | 60 | 55 | 55 | 57 | 42 | 47 | 419 |

Enrollment has increased by 30 students from June to September. However, since 55 sixth graders moved on and 30 preschoolers were replaced, the increase in enrollment is actually 55. The largest individual grade level increase is in Grade 4. A third Pre-K class was opened to accommodate a waiting list. A more detailed outline of personnel changes related to enrollment may be found on page 9 under ‘Personnel’.

An item of note in an historical review is the dramatic decrease in student enrollment in September 2016. That event actually coincides with a fire at a residential complex in the city which resulted in a reported 66 people being displaced, including 40 children. (“Fire damages large apartment building in Duquesne”, by Madasyn Czebiniak, Tribune Review

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Online, Tuesday, July 19, 2016) It took a year for the student enrollment numbers to recover.

The EL enrollment is currently 46, or approximately 11% of the building population. The increase in EL students prompted the decision to eliminate our contract with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to provide EL services and to transfer one full time teacher to EL instruction and to hire a second, including arrangements for training to acquire certification. These changes will result in more consistent services and is a budgetary savings. The EL population is spread across grade levels and includes multiple languages. Only three of the additional students are classified as EL.

The following tabulation reflects current classroom sections and average class size at each grade.

| Duquesne Elementary School | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|------|----|------|------|----|----|------|-------|
| Class Size | | | | | | | | | |
| September 30, 2019 | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade | Pre-K | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Total |
| Sections | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 22 |
| Average | 13.7 | 15.5 | 20 | 18.3 | 18.3 | 19 | 21 | 23.5 | 19 |

Attendance

Attendance through September 30 is at just over 90%. For the first 10 days of school the rate was under 88%. For the most recent week it has risen to nearly 95%. This is at least in part because unreported student withdrawals over the summer were removed from our enrollment.

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology

There were no monitoring visits during the first quarter of the school year.

The staffing changes for the 2019-20 school year are listed on page 9 under ‘Personnel’.

The District recently entered into a partnership with Literacy Pittsburgh to implement Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring in the school. This program pairs tutors over 50 years of age with students in grades K-4 who are in need of assistance.

New Software

Along with the District's new website, which was successfully launched May 1, 2019, the District has adopted BoardDocs as the software for the public Receiver Business Meetings. This will allow public access to the agendas prior to the meeting. The software also makes the agenda information ADA compliant.

Professional Development 2019-2020 School Year, Q1

Professional development (PD) for the staff of Duquesne City School District is occurring in multiple content areas. These areas include Project Based Learning (PBL), English Language Arts (ELA), math and restorative practices.

PBL/Collaborative Design

Our education partner, The TeamBuilders Group (TBG), is leading this professional development. TBG meets with our faculty on Tuesdays throughout the school year to assist with supporting the key elements to Project Based Learning as well as their own instructional philosophies surrounding collaboration in the classroom. All teachers are currently working in their learning circles and on modules developed by TBG. When TBG is not on-site, the group has developed a Google Classroom to assist in the learning with our staff.

ELA/iLit/SuccessMaker/ARC

We have begun our second year using iLit and Success Maker at Duquesne Elementary School. Grades 4-6 ELA teachers began the year with additional professional development for the iLit program. The K-3 teachers at Duquesne have also received professional development in their new reading program from American Reading Company (ARC). ARC will continue to support teachers throughout the school year as well as check-ins from Pearson around Success Maker and iLit. Duquesne is also using iLit ELL with ELs in grades 4-6.

Math/Ready

Math teachers in grades 3-6 received training this year with our new math materials from Curriculum Associates. This program is called Ready Math and includes a diagnostic testing program called iReady. All students in grades K-6 will complete iReady this year, but only students in grades 3-6 will use the Ready Math program. Grades K-2 will begin using Ready Math in the 2020-21 school year.

Restorative Practices

The Duquesne City School District has partnered with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). Through this partnership, all professional staff members and support staff members had two full days of training using restorative practices to improve trusting relationships with students in their classrooms. This effort is designed to establish a restorative approach to negative behaviors that will lead to a positive response and appropriate reaction to the situation.

ESL

The district's two ESL teachers and the district's Director of Curriculum and Instruction received professional development from the district's ESL support, Deborah Hioutis. Mrs. Hioutis will continue to support the ESL program throughout the school year in addition to ongoing support provided by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU).

Special Education

There were no on-site state visits July 1 – September 30.

We currently have 83 students in special education at DCSD. We have 13 students who we account for in outside placements. The percentage of special education is 19.7% for the students who attend DCSD. If we add the 13 outside placements the percentage is currently 22.8%.

So far this year 4 students have been tested and 11 more are to be tested as of this date.

Student Services

Our Duquesne Student Assistance Program (DSAP), an integral part of our effort to provide necessary services to our students, continues to operate for the 2019-20 school year. As of September 30, DSAP has received two referrals and evaluations are scheduled. Twenty-three students are currently receiving Tier II supports including four for behavioral issues, one for attendance, 16 who are identified as at-risk, and two for academic reasons.

Significant Activities

A team of teachers and administrators attended a week-long professional development program at the University of Virginia during July. The sessions were intense and related to the school turnaround efforts.

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A Community Back-to-School Barbeque took place at the gymnasium lobby the day before classes began. The event was supported by donations. Building tours were available to interested parents/community members.

Open house took place on August 28. Attendance was reportedly the best it has been for at least 10 years.

The recruitment effort spoken of in past reports continues. While the impact after year one may be reduced, there is an unknown influence which we believe is applicable to the increase in our student enrollment. Our intention is to continue this effort with regular mailings and periodic community events.

Duquesne Community Day took place on August 3 at the District stadium. School personnel attended and distributed literature promoting the District as a part of the overall recruiting effort, our “Bring Your Kids Home” campaign.

District personnel have been attending the midget football games at the District stadium on weekends to provide direct contact with community members, distribute literature, and sell promotional T-shirts. This is also a part of the recruiting effort.

Superintendent Moyer conducted an administrative retreat on August 8 and 9. Activities covered in the two-day event served to add consistency to the start of the school year.

Professional development week for the teaching staff preceded the start of student classes. Included in the week of training and preparation was technology, school safety and security, and clerical time.

The District was recognized for innovative STEAM resource room development on September 23, 2019, when the Grable Foundation hosted CelebratED at The O'Reilly Theater in Pittsburgh. Three rooms have been transformed into STEAM learning spaces and the library transformed into a Media Center. Several administrators, teachers and the receiver were in attendance at the 6:30 – 9:30 event.

The superintendent and the receiver attended a public announcement session with Governor Wolfe held in the McKeesport School District. At the session the Governor issued his plans to modify charter school protocols.

We received word from PDE of the appointment of a Chief Recovery Officer, Dr. William Kerr, for the District with an anticipated start date of October 1. This position has been vacant since the retirement of Dr. Paul Long and the appointment of CRO Dr. Paul Rach to the position of Receiver (March 1, 2018). We appreciate the additional assistance and anticipate a smooth transition to build on Duquesne’s success to date.

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Finance

The implementation of the 2019-2020 General Fund Budget began in the first quarter. There have been no unpaid or contested invoices or debt service obligations during the quarter. Furthermore, all payroll, benefit expenditures and tuition payments have been made on time.

The District has been awarded several grants which have made changes to both the programming and the projected deficit possible.

The following fund balance analysis is based on estimated year-end results for 2018-2019. The estimated year-end financial performance for 2018-2019 is a deficit of approximately \$375,000. This projected deficit is an improvement of \$1,146,421 as compared to the 2018-2019 budgeted General Fund deficit, due primarily to additional unbudgeted revenue. The projected 2018-2019 deficit should result in a projected total fund balance of \$4,574,342 as of June 30, 2019. A final, audited figure for the June 30, 2019 fund balance should be available in the January report.

| Duquesne City School District | | |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| General Fund | | |
| Fund Balance Analysis | | |
| June 30, 2019 | | |
| Non-spendable | | |
| Prepays | \$ 285,000 | |
| Other | 0 | |
| Total non-spendable | | \$ 285,000 |
| Restricted | | 0 |
| | | |
| Committed for extraordinary educational needs | \$ 1,000,000 | |
| Committed for increases in PSERS contributions | 152,560 | |
| Committed for increases in health benefit expense | 910,748 | |
| Committed for capital improvements | 250,000 | |
| Committed to refund Series 2013 Bonds when callable | 1,420,000 | |
| Total committed | | 3,733,308 |
| Assigned | | 0 |
| Unassigned | | 931,034 |
| Total fund balance as of June 30, 2018 (audited) | | 4,949,342 |
| Fund balance appropriation for the 2018-2019 budget | | (1,521,141) |
| Projected surplus (deficit) for the 2018-2019 budget | | (\$375,000) |
| Total projected fund balance as of June 30, 2019 | | \$4,574,342 |

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Bonds and Notes Payable

A summary of bonds and notes payable, which remains unchanged, is shown on the following table. Additional years have been added to the table to demonstrate the rapid retirement of debt over the period of time spanning from June 30, 2018 to June 30, 2023. While the liquidation of these liabilities is a positive, it should be noted that these debt service obligations will put a strain on the District's cash flow and fund balance in the absence of future additional resources.

| Duquesne City School District | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bonds and Notes Payable | | | |
| June 30, 2019 | | | |
| Fiscal Year Ending June 30 | Bonds Payable | Notes Payable | Total Bonds and Notes Payable |
| 2012* | \$14,124,167 | 0 | \$14,124,167 |
| 2013* | 13,173,333 | 0 | 13,173,333 |
| 2014* | 9,272,501 | \$1,000,000 | 10,272,501 |
| 2015* | 6,616,667 | 2,335,000 | 8,951,667 |
| 2016* | 6,110,833 | 1,500,000 | 7,610,833 |
| 2017* | 5,590,000 | 1,000,000 | 6,590,000 |
| 2018* | 5,054,167 | 1,000,000 | 6,054,167 |
| 2019** | 4,503,333 | 850,000 | 5,353,333 |
| 2020** | 3,122,500 | 790,000 | 3,912,500 |
| 2021** | 1,706,667 | 730,000 | 2,436,667 |
| 2022** | 250,833 | 665,000 | 915,833 |
| 2023** | \$215,000 | \$ - | \$215,000 |

* Audited financial statements

** Projected

Staffing

The following chart presents a summary of staffing at the DCSD as of September 30.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|---|
| Duquesne City School District | | | |
| 2019-2020 Staffing Summary | | | |
| September 30, 2019 | | | |
| Professional staff | 40 | Administrators* | 3 |
| Instructional support staff | 22 | Coordinators and supervisors* | 3 |
| Other support staff | 13 | Confidential exempt staff | 2 |

In addition to DCSD staff, part-time consultants have been utilized to assist in the following areas: special education administration (Keystone Consulting), business administration (James Graham), federal programs administration (Nancy Olenik) and communications coordination (Sarah McCluan). Also, the full time Receiver, Paul J. Rach, Ed.D. who is compensated by PDE, participated in administration and governance of the DCSD. The District will continue the contractual agreement with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to provide business management services to the district for 2019 – 2020. This plan was implemented July 1, 2018, and includes an annual opt-out provision should either entity find the situation untenable.

Personnel

The following is a summary of the personnel changes/additions which have occurred to date in the 2019-20 school year:

- Eric Harper – from Student Services Coordinator to Elementary Principal
- George Little – from Attendance Improvement Coordinator to Social Services Coordinator
- Jamie Schmidt – from ELA Instructional Coach (CBA position) to Director of Literacy and Innovation/Federal Programs (Act 93 position)
- Brian Stowell – from Paraeducator (DESPA position) to Attendance Improvement Coordinator (Act 93 position)
- Added a Kindergarten teacher – 4th classroom (increased enrollment)
- Added a 2nd grade teacher – 3rd classroom (increased enrollment)

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- Added an ESL K-3 teacher (replaced contracted service)
- Added an ESL 4-6 teacher (replaced contracted service)
- Added a Dean of Students (originally eliminated but data indicated a need)

A number of additional temporary changes have taken place to replace teacher leaves of absence for a variety of reasons. We also anticipate at least one resignation for retirement purposes at the end of the first semester, and we have already initiated the process to find a quality replacement.

Tuition

A major aspect of financial management at Duquesne is tuition for students attending school elsewhere. Current tuition enrollments are tabulated below. The chart also compares the list of enrollments to the June 2019 totals to give some perspective on the trend data.

| Duquesne City School District | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tuition Enrollments | | | | |
| September 30, 2019 | | | | |
| Receiving Schools | Grades | Students June 30 | Students September 30 | Projected 2019-2020 Tuition |
| West Mifflin Area School District | 7-12 | 311 | 319 | \$4,302,795 |
| East Allegheny School District | 7-12 | 24 | 23 | 315,173 |
| Charter schools, regular education | K-6 | 111 | 86 | 1,184,580 |
| Charter schools, special education | K-6 | 24 | 23 | 755,712 |
| Charter schools, regular education | 7-12 | 62 | 73 | 1,005,516 |
| Charter schools, special education | 7-12 | 16 | 22 | 722,855 |
| Special education schools | K-12 | 18 | 17 | 638,802 |
| Other schools | K-12 | 3 | 3 | 55,000 |
| Totals | | 569 | 566 | \$8,980,433 |

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Changes in individual tuition enrollments in the categories of receiving schools during the first quarter can be seen by comparing enrollments from June 30 to September 30 on the above table. While it is important to recognize that charter school enrollments tend to fluctuate more at the beginning of the year, a noteworthy trend is apparent. Elementary charter school enrollments are trending down (-26), while secondary charter enrollments are trending up (+17). The increase in secondary enrollment is commensurate with the relatively large classes that have matriculated from elementary to secondary over the past two school years. The reduction in elementary enrollment may be attributable to the success of the “Bring Your Kids Home” campaign that the District has continued to emphasize over the past year. In addition, the third pre-K room was opened. This reduction in the elementary charter school enrollment (-26) is particularly significant when juxtaposed to the growth in enrollment in pre-K to 6 (+30). Also of note is the EL enrollment increased by only three students in the same period.

It should also be noted that the table above includes Allegheny Intermediate Unit special education classroom tuition, whereas the tuition schedule on the Annual Financial Report does not include these costs.

The annual tuition rate for Duquesne students who attend school at West Mifflin Area and East Allegheny is \$13,703.17 for the 2019-20 school year. Tuition was calculated by PDE and communicated to the District, with the District given an opportunity for comment.

The annual tuition rate originally budgeted for each regular education charter school student for 2019-20 is \$13,774.19 based on actual, calculated rates in 2018-19. For each special education student who attends a charter school, the original budgeted annual tuition is \$32,857.06. Current rates for 2019-20 have not yet been set via calculation as the District awaits final Average Daily Membership figures for 2018-19. Upon completion of the 2019-20 PDE 363, these rates will be updated.

Enrollments of Duquesne students in charter schools at key months over the last several years are depicted below. As total District enrollment has increased, charter school enrollment has seen relatively little variance, meaning a smaller percentage of Duquesne students are enrolled in charter schools compared to September of 2018.

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| Duquesne City School District | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Charter School Enrollments | | | | |
| September 30, 2019 | | | | |
| Month | Year | Elementary | Secondary | Total Enrollment |
| September | 2015 | 132 | 54 | 186 |
| March | 2016 | 129 | 60 | 189 |
| June | 2016 | 131 | 61 | 192 |
| September | 2016 | 172 | 58 | 230 |
| March | 2017 | 145 | 62 | 207 |
| June | 2017 | 145 | 58 | 203 |
| September | 2017 | 160 | 52 | 212 |
| December | 2017 | 162 | 62 | 224 |
| March | 2018 | 158 | 54 | 212 |
| June | 2018 | 147 | 51 | 198 |
| September | 2018 | 152 | 51 | 203 |
| December | 2018 | 156 | 52 | 208 |
| March | 2019 | 154 | 56 | 210 |
| June | 2019 | 135 | 78 | 213 |
| September | 2019 | 109 | 95 | 204 |

Facilities

Facilities upkeep is a constant in a 100 year old building with a 20 year old renovation. Several of the repairs initiated over the summer and early fall included major repairs to the HVAC system, repairing vinyl floors in the corridors, and replacing a roof on the ticket booth at the stadium (storm damage which was reported to the insurance carrier). An inspection of school building in early August revealed a mold issue in one of the cafeterias, confined primarily to the areas where old tables had been stored and on the tables themselves. The mold was abated by a contractor, the source of the moisture was addressed, and the tables were replaced before students arrived for the first day of classes. Mold was also reported in the unused locker room areas and was resolved by removing the original carpeting and washing down the areas.

For the third consecutive year, water testing revealed no lead in the water at the school except for unused areas of the building. (locker rooms, trainer's room) Those unused sections were flushed out and retested, and lead levels were reduced to well below recommended maximums.

Governance and Administration

The DCSD Superintendent of Schools is Sue A. Moyer. She is supervised by Receiver Paul J. Rach, Ed.D. Both Ms. Moyer and Dr. Rach took their respective offices on March 1, 2018. Dr. Rach reports to the Duquesne City Board of School Directors, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas (ACCCP). At PDE, Dr. Rach reports to Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera via Executive Deputy Secretary of Education David W. Volkman, D.Ed. and Deputy Secretary of Education for Administration Debbie Reeves. At the ACCCP, Dr. Rach reports to Senior Judge Judith L.A. Friedman.

The Duquesne City Board of School Directors consists of the following members:

1. Board President DeWayne Tucker
2. Board Vice President Calvin Harris
3. School Director Sonya Gooden
4. School Director Burton Comensky
5. School Director Laura Elmore
6. School Director Christine Matsko
7. School Director Rosia Reid
8. School Director Cedric Robertson
9. School Director Maxine Thomas

Members of the Duquesne City Board of School Directors participated in two Receiver Business Meetings in the first quarter: August 13 and September 24. Attendance by school directors was five and four, respectively, with two reporting off ill each time.

The primary election resulted in all incumbent elected board members retaining their seats on the board. There is no expectation that this result will change in the general election.

Next Report

The next quarterly Recovery Plan Progress Report will cover the second quarter of fiscal year 2019-2020 – October 1 through December 31, 2019. That report will be filed in January.

Acknowledgements

The following individuals contributed to this report:

1. Paul J. Rach, Ed.D., Receiver, DCSD
2. Sue A. Moyer, M.Ed., Superintendent of Schools, DCSD
3. Stanley B. Whiteman III, Ed.D., Director of Curriculum and Instruction, DES

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4. Eric Harper., Principal, DES
5. James E. Miller III, Technology Coordinator, DCSD
6. Joseph Merhaut, Ed.D., Special Education Consultant (Keystone Consulting)
7. James B. Graham, Business Consultant
8. Aaron Hassett, Business Manager, contract with AIU
9. George Little, Social Services Coordinator, DES
10. Brian Stowell , Attendance Improvement Coordinator, DES
11. Crystal Irdi, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Secretary, DCSD