

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

**Recovery Plan  
Quarterly Progress Report**

July 15, 2017

***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 fourth quarter of fiscal year 2016-2017, i.e. April 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017. The previous quarterly progress report in the series is dated April 15, 2017.

***Executive Summary***

Several highlights of interest from this report follow.

- Recovery Plan implementation has continued through the fourth quarter.
- The Duquesne City School District (DCSD) continues to operate pre-kindergarten through sixth grade at the Duquesne Elementary School (DES).
- Continued operation of DES is planned for the foreseeable future.
- Efforts to improve curriculum and instruction at DES continue, as addressed in the 2017 revision of its School Level Comprehensive Plan, effective July 1, 2017.
- DCSD finances have been stable and are projected to be sustainable.
- Student enrollment at DES increased slightly during the fourth quarter from 335 to 336, up from 324 in December and 320 in September.
- Total charter school enrollments in kindergarten through twelfth grade continued to decrease in the fourth quarter to 203, down from 207 in March and 230 in September.
- Annual tuition to be paid by Duquesne for students attending school elsewhere in 2016-2017 is projected to be \$7,606,578, up from \$7,317,637 reported in the previous quarter.
- The increased tuition projection is attributed to an increase in enrollment of Duquesne resident secondary students at West Mifflin Area and, to a lesser extent, at East Allegheny.

***Supplemental Information***

Please see the DCSD website, [dukecitysd.org](http://dukecitysd.org), for an historical summary of the severe financial recovery status of the DCSD, its receivership and criteria for exiting recovery status.

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***Implementation Narrative***

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

1. Education (page 2)
2. Finance (page 6)
3. Governance and Administration (page 9)

***Education***

Historic and current student enrollments at DES are displayed on the following table. It is noteworthy that DES enrollment has increased during the 2016-2017 school year, although only slightly during the fourth quarter.

Duquesne Elementary School Student Enrollment June 1, 2017									
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

Another look at enrollment is the following tabulation of current regular education sections and average class size at each grade.

Duquesne Elementary School Regular Education Sections June 1, 2017									
Grade >	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Sections	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	19
Average	13.0	17.7	15.7	20.0	17.0	19.0	21.5	18.0	17.7

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Projected sections and estimated class sizes for the first day of school (August 23) in the 2017-2018 school year follow.

Duquesne Elementary School Planned Regular Education Sections Projected for August 23, 2017									
Grade >	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Sections	2	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	21
Average	13.0	14.0	17.7	15.7	20.0	17.0	19.0	21.5	17.0

The Curriculum Steering Committee has continued its work with implementation and oversight of educational initiatives at Duquesne. Under the leadership of Principal Jennifer Jennings, the committee meets regularly to discuss issues of student achievement, curriculum, effective instruction, professional development, comprehensive planning and administrative support at DES. Other members of the Steering Committee are Superintendent Barbara McDonnell, Assistant Principal Stanley Whiteman, Special Education Consultant Debra Zimarowski, Federal Programs Consultant Nancy Olenik, and DES’s four instructional coaches: Michelle Kimmell, Celeste Rudge, Jamie Schmidt and Samantha Utley. Furthermore, Academic Recovery Liaison (ARL) Barbara Mehalov regularly assists the Committee.

During the fourth quarter, the Steering Committee concentrated its work on adjustments planned for the 2017-2018 school year, as documented in the 2017 revision of the School Level Comprehensive Plan. The five goals listed below were reaffirmed in the revision of the Plan. The Steering Committee has identified the first three of these goals as the most important. Improvement of school culture, as it relates to these three goals, has been the central focus of attention.

1. Ensure that there is a system within the school that fully ensures a safe and supportive environment for all students.
2. Ensure that there is a system within the school that fully ensures consistent implementation of effective instructional practices that meet the needs of all students across all classrooms and aligns with the Pennsylvania Framework for Teaching.
3. Ensure that there is a system within the school that fully ensures consistent implementation of a standards aligned curriculum framework across all classrooms for all students.
4. Ensure there is a system within the school that fully ensures school-wide use of data that is focused on school improvement and the academic growth of students.
5. Ensure that there is a system in the school that fully ensures the principal is enabled to serve as a strong instructional leader who, in partnership with the school community (students, staff, parents, community, etc.) leads achievement growth and continuous improvement within the school.

A major strategy of the DES School Level Comprehensive Plan has been the organization of two Duquesne Learning Academies within DES. Students in grades pre-k through third grade will be in the Early Literacy Academy and students in grades four through six will be in the STREAM

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Academy (STREAM stands for: science, technology, reading, engineering, arts and math). The Steering Committee believes that the smaller environment for teaching and learning in each academy will help to rejuvenate relationships among teachers and students and engender a sense of their belonging to a learning community. Improving the culture of the school in this way is expected to elevate the calling of teachers to educate students to a higher standard and thus improve student achievement.

There were no changes to instructional staff that would impact education for the quarter. Looking forward to the 2017-2018 school year, two substitute teachers will take the places of two teachers who are expected to be on maternity leave. Also for 2017-2018, a clerical position is being added to assist with improving student attendance, reducing truancy and enhancing student guidance.

Dr. Linda Lane has continued in her role as consultant to Principal Jennifer Jennings on matters of instructional leadership and school culture, especially in regard to implementation of the recently revised School Level Comprehensive Plan. Dr. Lane and Mrs. Jennings met on seven occasions during the fourth quarter: April 19, May 9, 16, 18, June 20, 26 and July 17. The June 20 meeting involved several other members of DCSD staff, including Superintendent Barbara McDonnell.

Academic Recovery Liaison (ARL) Mrs. Barbara Mehalov visited DES on April 18, 24, May 12, and 17 to meet with DES Principal Mrs. Jennifer Jennings and Assistant Principal Mr. Stanley Whiteman. Also, on June 1, Mrs. Mehalov arranged and participated in joint training for Duquesne and Wilksburg teachers and administrators on use of PDE's Standards Aligned System (SAS).

On May 30, a combined federal programs visit was conducted by Ms. Erin Oberdorf to cover the monitoring requirements of Title I, Priority School and DES's School Improvement Grant. All monitoring results were favorable and no deficiencies were noted.

Special education monitor Ms. Cortney Verner visited the DCSD on three occasions during the quarter. On April 10 compliance monitoring and improvement needs were reviewed in regard to the recent Cyclical Monitoring for Continuous Improvement (CMCI). On June 13, Ms. Verner toured DES to view the location and adequacy of special education classrooms planned for the 2017-2018 school year. Finally, on June 28 she assisted in planning for Corrective Action Verification (CAV) requirements, which are to be established and implemented by June 30, 2018.

A comprehensive program of professional development (PD) for the faculty continued in the fourth quarter. One PD highlight was training teachers on Apple iPods and using these computers with virtual reality software to design lessons for their classrooms.

Benchmarking and diagnostic assessments of student learning in ELA and mathematics are conducted periodically at DES in kindergarten through sixth grade. The results of this year's third round of testing follow below. Although test scores are low, there was improvement over

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previous benchmarking results. The results of the first and second rounds of benchmark assessments were reported in the Recovery Plan Quarterly Progress Report of January 15, 2017.

Duquesne Elementary School Math Third Benchmark Assessment, Study Island May 2017				
Grade	% Below Basic	% Basic	% Proficient	% Advanced
3	59	25	16	0
4	63	32	4	2
5	67	26	8	0
6	68	29	3	0

Duquesne Elementary School ELA Third Benchmark Assessment, Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) May 2017			
Grade	% Below Grade	% On Grade	% Above Grade
3	41	31	28
4	49	16	35
5	45	36	18
6	27	38	34

Benchmarking assessments are also conducted in kindergarten through second grade. For reading, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is used. The GMADE assessment is used for math.

In July 2017, DES students will be participating in the Literacy and Legends Reading Program. This extended school year program is for students entering grades one through six. It focuses on strengthening students understanding of the basic literacy components such as comprehension, fluency, phonics and decoding and writing, while integrating science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) components. Each grade level has a theme that helps structure the student's focus. First and second grade students focus on traditional fairy tales, third grade focuses on indigenous cultures of the United States, fourth grade studies ancient Greece, while fifth and sixth graders investigate ancient Egypt. To date, 52 students are enrolled in the summer program.

In a letter of May 11, Secretary Rivera announced the re-establishment of the Education Advisory Committee (EAC). The transition and education of Duquesne secondary students at West Mifflin and East Allegheny will be addressed by the EAC. Nominations for Duquesne's six members of the EAC were made to Secretary Rivera on June 5.

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***Finance***

Execution of the 2016-2017 General Fund Budget continued routinely during the fourth quarter. There have been no unpaid or contested invoices or debt service obligations, with the two exceptions as explained below. Furthermore, all payroll, benefits and tuition payments have been made on time. The first payment exception is for tuition invoices received from the West Mifflin Area (WMA) School District for Duquesne's secondary students who are enrolled there. These invoices were billed at a tuition rate unilaterally increased by WMA, but were paid at the rate established by PDE. The second exception is tuition invoices for Duquesne resident students who attend the Steel Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE). Per long standing practice, these invoices had been sent to and paid by WMA. However, this school year, WMA unilaterally directed that the invoices be sent to Duquesne. Both of these exceptions are, in part, the subject of lawsuits filed by WMA against the PDE, Secretary Rivera and the DCSD.

The 2017-2018 General Fund Budget was approved on June 27. The budget was balanced at \$18,154,290, which should maintain all curriculum, programs, services and staffing. An appropriation from fund balance was not necessary to balance the budget. The real estate tax rate was maintained at 17.5 mills. In one of their rare opportunities to vote, the Duquesne City School Board unanimously approved the required tax levy resolution.

The following fund balance analysis is based on un-audited year-end results for 2016-2017 and the DCSD General Fund Budget for 2016-2017.

Duquesne City School District General Fund Fund Balance Analysis June 30, 2017		
Non-spendable		
Prepays	\$ 175,000	
Accrued debt service subsidy	118,320	
Total non-spendable		\$ 293,320
Restricted		0
Committed		
Committed for extraordinary educational needs	\$ 1,000,000	
Committed for increases in PSERS contributions	284,666	
Committed for increases in health benefit expense	934,442	
Committed for capital improvements	250,000	
Committed to refund Series 2013 Bonds when callable	1,750,000	
Total committed		4,219,108
Assigned		0
Unassigned		687,572
Fund balance appropriation for the 2016-2017 budget		0
Projected surplus (deficit) for the 2016-2017 budget		0
Total projected fund balance as of June 30, 2017		5,200,000

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A key component of the DCSD's financial recovery is reduction long term liabilities, most importantly interest bearing debt. A summary of bonds and notes payable is shown on the following table.

Duquesne City School District Bonds and Notes Payable June 30, 2017			
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

\* Audited financial statements

\*\* Projected

The Series 2013 bonds are callable in January 2019. It is the intention of the DCSD to call some or all of the 2013 bonds at that time. Cash to liquidate 2013 bonds will be from fund balance committed for that purpose and the proceeds of an interest free loan from PDE's Transition Loan Program, if transition loan funds are available.

As in almost all school districts, the paramount aspect of finance at Duquesne is management of salary and benefit expenses. The following chart presents a summary of staffing at the DCSD as of June 1. There have been no changes in authorized staff positions during the fourth quarter. The only changes since the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year were the addition of two institutional support staff members, both personal care assistants.

Duquesne City School District 2016-2017 Staffing Summary June 30, 2017			
Professional staff	39	Administrators *	4
Instructional support staff	24	Coordinators and supervisors*	3
Other support staff	10	Confidential exempt staff	2

\* In addition to DCSD staff, part time consultants have been utilized to assist in the following areas: instructional leadership and school culture (Dr. Linda Lane), special education administration (Ms. Debra Zimarowski), business administration (Mr. James Graham), federal programs administration (Ms. Nancy Olenik) and communications coordination (Ms. Sarah McCluan). Additionally, the part time Academic Recovery Liaison (ARL), Mrs. Barbara Mehalov, who is compensated by PDE, provides consultative services for curriculum and instruction administration. Also, the part time Chief Recovery Officer (CRO), Dr. Paul J. Rach, and the full time Receiver, Dr. Paul B. Long, both compensated by PDE, participate in administration and governance of the DCSD.

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The current collective bargaining agreement between the DCSD and the Duquesne Education Association (DEA) expires on June 30, 2017. Negotiations for a new contract began on February 21, 2017 and are continuing. Until a new contract is fully ratified, the previous contract remains in effect as the status quo.

Administrators, supervisors and confidential-exempt staff were given a 1.7% cost of living pay raise effective July 1. A second increment of pay raise, to be based on Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (PSPP) improvement, will be considered in the autumn.

The current collective bargaining agreement between the DCSD and the Duquesne Educational Support Professionals Association (DESPA) runs until June 30, 2018. However, para-educators and personal care assistants, who had not been members of DESPA, voted to join the bargaining unit. Collective bargaining in regard to their inclusion in the bargaining unit began on February 21, 2017 and is continuing.

On April 10, a regular audit by the Department of the Auditor General began. The audit will cover 2012-2013 and forward. To date, the audit is on-going.

A major aspect of financial management at Duquesne is tuition for students attending school elsewhere. Current tuition enrollments are tabulated below.

Duquesne City School District Tuition Enrollments June 30, 2017				
Receiving Schools	Grades	Students March 31	Students June 1	Projected 2016-2017 Tuition
West Mifflin Area School District	7-12	274	306	\$3,510,533
East Allegheny School District	7-12	41	47	539,199
Charter schools, regular education	K-6	126	127	1,662,164
Charter schools, special education	K-6	19	18	576,343
Charter schools, regular education	7-12	46	46	602,044
Charter schools, special education	7-12	16	12	384,229
Special education schools	K-12	13	13	223,571
Other schools	K-12	9	9	108,495
Totals		544	578	\$7,606,578

Changes in individual tuition enrollment categories during the fourth quarter can be seen by comparing enrollments from March to June on the above table. Enrollment of Duquesne resident secondary students at both West Mifflin Area and East Allegheny increased. Charter school enrollment decreased each quarter since the beginning of the school year from 230 in September, to 210 in December, to 207 in March to the current enrollment of 203. The total number of tuition students increased from 554 to 578 during the fourth quarter.



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The annual tuition rate for Duquesne students who attend school in West Mifflin Area and East Allegheny is \$11,472.33. PDE sets this rate and regularly adjusts it. The same rate is paid for both regular education students and special education students.

Charter school tuition rates are normally set and regularly adjusted by PDE. The current annual tuition for each regular education student charter school student is \$13,087.91. For each special education student who attends a charter school, the current annual tuition is \$32,019.05.

Enrollments of Duquesne students in charter schools at key months over the last several years are depicted below. Beginning with this report, enrollment of elementary and secondary students is broken out.

Duquesne City School District Charter School Enrollments June 30, 2017				
Month	Year	Elementary	Secondary	Total Enrollment
September	2015			186
March	2016			189
June	2016			192
September	2016			230
January	2017			210
March	2017			207
		Elementary	Secondary	Total Enrollment
June	2017	145	58	203

***Governance and Administration***

The Superintendent of the DCSD is Barbara E. McDonnell, M.Ed. She is supervised by Chief Recovery Officer Paul J. Rach, Ed.D. Both Ms. McDonnell and Dr. Rach report to the Receiver, Paul B. Long, Ed.D., who 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. Long 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. Long reports to Senior Judge Judith L.A. Friedman.

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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 Chambers
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 Theresa Thomas

Members of the Duquesne City Board of School Directors participated in three receiver business meetings in the fourth quarter. Six school directors attended on April 25, five on May 23 and six on June 27. An executive session was held prior to each of the business meetings. On the same evening as the June 27 receiver business meeting, the School Board conducted a special meeting to consider approval of the 2017 tax levy resolution. The Receiver Advisory Council met once during the fourth quarter on May 9.

***Next Report***

The next quarterly Recovery Plan Progress Report will cover the first quarter of fiscal year 2017-2018, i.e. July 1 through September 30, 2017. That report will be filed in October.

***Acknowledgements***

The following individuals, all affiliated with the Duquesne City School District, contributed to this report.

1. Paul J. Rach, Ed.D., Chief Recovery Officer
2. Barbara E. McDonnell, M.Ed., Superintendent
3. Nedene M. Gullen, Business Manager
4. Jennifer M. Jennings, M.Ed., Principal, DES
5. Stanley B. Whiteman III, M.Ed., Assistant Principal, DES
6. James E. Miller III, Technology Coordinator
7. Debra M. Zimarowski, Special Education Consultant
8. James B. Graham, Business Consultant