

April 18, 2013

**Supplemental Information – PCSB FY2014 Budget Questions**

**This document will address several key PCSB initiatives in need of funding in FY2014:**

1. **Interagency Liaison - $100,000**
2. **Common Application - $25,000**
3. **Residency Fraud - $25,000**
4. **Strategic Planning - $100,000**

(Budget Question 5 – FY14 Programmatic Expansions)

**1) Interagency Liaison- FTE $100,000**

With nearly 35,000 students attending charter schools (43 percent of the public school population), citywide issues that affect the health and safety of public school students increasingly affect public charter school students, for example on issues of truancy or youth and public safety. Additionally, there are also opportunities available from city agencies -- for example partnerships with city libraries or other agencies -- that would enhance the education outcomes of public charter students.

PCSB already takes part in several citywide and agency initiatives (See attached list). But in its oversight role, PCSB is charged with overseeing charter school performance and making sure that schools are compliant with legal requirements. Since each charter school is its own Local Education Agency (LEA), it is incredibly difficult for city agencies to reach out to 57 individual charter LEAs across 102 campuses for planning. Agencies from the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to the Department of Transportation (DDOT), Child and Family Services (CFSA), Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the Department of Health (DOH) are some examples of city agencies that have asked PCSB to play an intermediary role so that charter schools are more engaged in agency initiatives that affect public charter school students.

PCSB has welcomed this seat at the table. However, our effectiveness in producing outcomes in this role has been limited by the fact that PCSB participation has been spread out internally among several staff, without any one FTE owning this role. Therefore, PCSB is requesting a FTE who can liaison between government agencies and charter schools.

This newly funded position would help facilitate public charter school students being served by multiple DC agencies. Below is a draft position description:

Health, Safety, and Human Services Specialist

This individual will be responsible for improving the coordination between the charter school sector, city agencies, and NGOs with the goal of improving health and safety outcomes for children in charter schools and improving the ability of city agencies to coordinate delivery of services to and collection of information from charter schools.

Among the responsibilities include:

* Serving as the primary person at PCSB responsible for public safety, including ensuring schools have emergency plans in place, coordinate the provision to schools with technical assistance in needed areas, and serving as the principal 7x24 liaison with MPD.
* Serving as the primary person at PCSB responsible for health and mental health issues. Principle liaisons with DOH, DMH, and other city agencies, as well as principle liaison with non-profits offering health services with the goal of ensuring maximum service delivery to charter schools and maximum coordination between charters and health services.
* Serving as the primary liaison on human services, including CFSA, the courts, as well as other human services agencies, to improve these organizations ability to coordinate and deliver services to charter schools. Areas of focus will include truancy, services to children in foster care, and services to homeless children.

**2) Common Application**

DC parents have said that with so many different application dates, the process of picking a charter school was confusing and headache-inducing -- leading some parents to throw up their hands and opt out. The process can be a subtle barrier to the least advantaged families trying to navigate it.

For the first time, more than 85 charter schools agreed to a common timeline for applying to a school, finding out the application result, and accepting a space. The results have been tremendous. One public charter school saw a 66 percent increase in applications. Another charter school said that this year they saw their highest interest level from parents yet, showing that awareness of the deadline was high. With schools sharing information about their acceptance lists, we expect far fewer duplicate enrollments – which result to a large number of students changing schools at the beginning of the year, known as the “wait list shuffle.”

This effort was a result of a working group of charter schools. Now the working group is turning its attention to the next issues, a common lottery and common application, for charters and the traditional school system. To move toward a common system of choice that will work well for parents and for charter schools, PCSB is requesting an additional $25,000 to support this effort.

**3) Residency Fraud**

DC public schools are open to DC residents, and when nonresident commit fraud to attend DC schools, it takes away a spot from a resident and is a misappropriation of taxpayer funds. For the first time in FY13, PCSB took on the responsibility of investigating residency fraud, hiring an investigator to look into cases referred to PCSB by OSSE, or received directly into PCSB.

The results of our effort in FY13 attached:

This work allows PCSB to safeguard taxpayer funds and removes a non-education responsibility from charter schools, however this initiative cannot continue in FY14 without funding.

4) **Strategic Planning Manager – FTE $100,000**

As charter schools grow, PCSB is increasingly asked to participate more and more in strategic planning so that areas of the city that have a dearth of high-quality education seats can be better served. This request comes from DC government officials as well as parents and the community wanting to see all neighborhoods served by high-quality schools.

PCSB needs to create in-house planning capacity in order to fully participate in citywide discussions on creating more high-quality education seats across all DC neighborhoods. This individual will be responsible for developing PCSB’s perspective on future evolution of charter schools in DC, including:

* Specific neighborhoods, types of schools, and grades of highest need
* Forecasts of supply and demand under various scenarios
* Better understanding student migration patters to inform PCSB oversight and authorizing decisions
* Short- and long-term impact of PCSB authorizing decisions on supply of quality seats, transportation and commuting impacts, impacts on DCPS and other city services.
* Facilities landscape, needs, and solutions
* Special analyses in such areas as students with disabilities or expelled students

This individual will be the primary liaison to the City on issues of planning, relying on city-produced analysis where possible and contributing to the City’s analysis where PCSB has access to unique information or perspectives.

This individual will also be the primary staff-level interlocutor with the city and city agencies on efforts to improve coordination between charters, DCPS, and other city agencies in areas of planning, growth, facilities, and transportation.