



# DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parent or Guardian,

Detroit Public Schools has announced a comprehensive transformation plan aimed at improving academics and creating a more efficient system of high-performing schools for all DPS students. By doing so early, much earlier than has traditionally been the case in Detroit, parents can make plans for enrollment and also seek information about their children's schools.

This is a critically important time in the history of Detroit Public Schools and for our city. I have stated frequently that Detroit Public Schools must not only be a part of Detroit's comeback, it must LEAD it. We have been using an outdated educational model that we must discard. We must embark on a bold and ambitious journey that I believe will return this City to its rightful place as the world class leader in public education, a position it once held.

The announcement included the following:

- Due to declining enrollment and shifting demographics, we have 69,616 students, preK-12<sup>th</sup> grade, in a district with seats for 110,660 students. The vacant seats, taken together, represent what would be equivalent to the second largest school district in the state. And, future trends call for continued reduction in school-age population. Rather than continue to support buildings that are far under-utilized, we will close, consolidate and merge schools, allowing us to drive additional resources to a smaller group of higher-quality facilities and to our students in those buildings.
- Detroit Public Schools will charter four schools that face enrollment and facilities challenges and have been under-performing based on state standards. The rigorous DPS process to select proven charter operators that have demonstrated success with raising academic achievement will provide a new opportunity for these schools. We will continue to serve as the charter authorizer and will monitor their academic and fiscal progress.
- I, along with Chancellor John Covington of the new statewide Education Achievement System, will place 15 historically low-performing schools in the new system, where they will be wrapped in additional resources and given greater autonomy to succeed. The schools selected are among the 5 percent of schools that ranked lowest in the state for achievement.
- We will open four additional brand new buildings for the fall as part of the district's bond construction project, which will allow us to consolidate 7 outdated buildings so that 4,500 children may start the year in state-of-the-art facilities designed for 21st century learning. These four schools represent \$150 million in educational investments thanks to Detroit voters. Already, some 10,000 Detroit students are learning every day inside new or renovated buildings opened this past year through this program.

**Your school -- Mason Elementary School -- is among the schools that are a part of this transformation.**

**While the building will close, all students currently enrolled at Mason Elementary School will be offered enrollment at Farwell Elementary-Middle School. New students residing in the Mason Elementary School boundary will be assigned to either Farwell Elementary-Middle School or Nolan Elementary-Middle School, depending on the student's address. Farwell will be renamed Mason Elementary-Middle School. In the last five years, Mason lost 13 percent of its enrollment and is projected to lose another 29 percent in the next five years. Among all DPS facilities, Mason Elementary School is the 14<sup>th</sup> lowest ranked building. Nolan and Farwell are the two better buildings in this area and are well-suited for the DPS PreK-8 academic model. The successful Mason academic program will benefit the lower performing Farwell program. In addition to the academic benefits of this transition, Mason, Nolan and Farwell schools are all located within a two-mile radius and have a combined 1,000 empty seats. Therefore, only two schools are needed in this area of declining population.**

While we know that transition is difficult, we are doing everything possible to ensure a smooth start of the school year by starting this process now. A new Open Enrollment period will be held during the month of March to allow for important decisions to be made. Wrapping up the school assignments for current students early will allow for staffing and budgeting decisions to be made on a timely basis, to ensure a smooth start to the new school year including the placement of a teacher in front of every child on the first day of school.

Most importantly, through this transition plan, we are doing everything possible to ensure that all children in Detroit Public Schools have the opportunity to succeed at the highest levels and direct resources where they are needed most. Together we will make Detroit Public Schools the best system of quality schools of any city in the nation.

Please go to [detroitk12.org/achievement](http://detroitk12.org/achievement) for more information. We will continue to keep you informed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roy S. Roberts". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Roy S. Roberts

Emergency Manager, Detroit Public Schools