



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 We have been using an outdated educational model that we must discard.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-12th 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 -- Barton Elementary School -- is among the schools that are a part of this transformation.

Students will be reassigned to the new \$21.8 million Mackenzie PreK- 8 School, which will include a large open media center serving the needs of the school's middle and elementary students. The building design will focus on student safety and will be environmentally responsible. Bright, sustainable classrooms will line colorful corridors centered around an academic commons area and teacher work centers. The new school is among the 18 new or renovated schools that are part of the \$500.5 million DPS Capital Improvement Program.

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 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