

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Education of Students with Physical Disabilities



- Post Reprint: "D.C. Public Schools closure list — January 2013"
- Post Reprint: "Chancellor Kaya Henderson names 15 D.C. schools on closure list"
- Student Activity: Stakeholders in the Deaf Community
- Think Like a Reporter: Write a Human Interest Feature
- Post Informational Graphic: An Aid to Hearing

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Do You Have a Right to an Education? focuses on the rights of the physically disabled student as well as the rights of girls and undocumented students.

Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, children with disabilities are guaranteed a free, appropriate public education. This resource guide includes materials to examine the closing of two DCPS special education schools and to consider the deaf community and its stakeholders.

Recent developments in technology and medicine have transformed the lives of deaf people, providing opportunities to better assimilate into everyday life and to embrace the deaf culture of those who see deafness more as a community and less as a disability. With Washington, D.C., serving as the epicenter of the world of the deaf, students will have the opportunity to learn about Gallaudet University and to connect with stakeholders, including deaf educators, interpreters, CODAS (Children of Deaf Adults) and prominent members of the deaf community.



Phil Dignan currently teaches English and journalism at South Lakes High School in Reston, Va. He wrote “Stakeholders in the Deaf Community” and “Think Like a Reporter.” Dignan grew up with deaf parents and claims American Sign Language to be his first language. Dignan worked as a free-lance interpreter while a student at the University of North Florida.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

D.C. Public Schools closure list — January 2013

Special education schools mentioned in the “Better Schools for All Students: DCPS’ Consolidation and Reorganization Plan,” released Jan. 17 by DCPS. For the complete list 15 schools named by Chancellor Kaya Henderson, go to <http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/local/dc-public-schools-closure-list-january-2013/25/>.

Original School	School Type	Proposal	Final Plan	Rationale For Change/Programmatic Improvements
Choice at Hamilton	Special education and alternative education	Relocate to Cardozo.	Relocate to Emery.	With Cardozo HS moving into its newly modernized facility and expanding to serve the Shaw MS students, DCPS is concerned about co-locating another program in the building. Relocating the program to Emery, currently used as training space, will also maximize use of that building.
Mamie D. Lee	Special education and alternative education	Relocate to River Terrace in August 2014.	No change	In an effort to serve students closer to home and increase efficiencies, through better utilizing our space and decreasing our transportation costs, DCPS will work with the Sharpe Health and Mamie D. Lee communities over the next 18 months to engage in the facility modernization and program planning process for River Terrace.
Sharpe Health	Special education and alternative education	Relocate to River Terrace in August 2014.	No change	In an effort to serve students closer to home and increase efficiencies, through better utilizing our space and decreasing our transportation costs, DCPS will work with the Sharpe Health and Mamie D. Lee communities over the next 18 months to engage in the facility modernization and program planning process for River Terrace.
Prospect Learning Center	Special education and alternative education	Close and resign to neighborhood high schools.	No change	DCPS believes it is necessary to assign the students from Prospect LC to newly developed self-contained learning disabilities classrooms at Garrison ES, Jefferson Academy MS, and Eastern HS. The Office of Special Education will provide individual case management services to ensure the proper placement of each and every student.

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Chancellor Kaya Henderson names 15 D.C. schools on closure list

BY EMMA BROWN

• *Published on January 17, 2013*

More than one in 10 D.C. public schools will close as part of a plan Chancellor Kaya Henderson put forth Thursday, a retrenchment amid budget pressures, low enrollment and growing competition from public charter schools.

Henderson will shutter 15 schools, affecting more than 2,400 students and more than 540 employees. Closing half-empty schools will allow her to use resources more efficiently, she said, redirecting dollars from administration and maintenance to teaching and learning.

The move is another benchmark in the fundamental remaking of public education in the District, where the school system has lost more than 100,000 students since its peak enrollment in the 1960s.

City leaders have been faced with under-enrollment for years, but the situation has become more pronounced with the rapid growth of charter schools since the mid-1990s. Funded with taxpayer dollars but operated independently of the school system, charters now enroll more than 40 percent of the city's students, putting Washington at the leading edge of a national movement toward charters.

"We can't ignore the fact that we as

a city have embraced school choice," Henderson told D.C. Council members during a briefing Thursday. "If we proliferate charter schools, we have to know that is going to have an impact."

Five years ago, then-Chancellor Michelle A. Rhee accelerated the downsizing of the D.C. school system when she moved quickly to close 23 schools, igniting angry protest and long-lasting political backlash while spurring an exodus of students to the city's charters.

Henderson's proposed closures also triggered opposition, but she is widely seen to have handled community relations more deftly than her predecessor, sponsoring a series of public meetings throughout the city and inviting parents and activists to help refine the closure plan.

That feedback persuaded the chancellor to remove five schools from her original closure list, including Garrison Elementary and Francis-Stevens Education Campus, two Northwest Washington schools in relatively affluent neighborhoods. Parents at both schools mounted vigorous campaigns against closure.

Henderson cited parents' willingness to help recruit new students and demographic data showing that Northwest neighborhoods, particularly around Garrison, are growing faster than officials previously understood. Francis-Stevens will fill its extra

space by serving as a second campus for the School Without Walls, a selective high school nearby.

Faced with criticism that she hadn't given equal consideration to parental concerns and ideas emerging from less-privileged parts of the city, Henderson said that many of the proposals she received included requests for extra investments of millions of dollars.

"Lots of folks came up with plans. Some we were able to move with, others we were not able to," Henderson said. "Leadership is about making hard decisions."

Smothers Elementary in Northeast also will stay open, as will Malcolm X Elementary in Southeast, which will be operated in partnership with a "high-performing charter school" that Henderson declined to identify. Southeast's Johnson Middle School will stay open because school officials say they think that moving the students to other schools filled with teenagers from rival neighborhoods could cause safety concerns.

All 15 schools marked for closure are east of Rock Creek Park, many of them east of the Anacostia River in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods, and all had below-average test scores. They include the first high school to close in recent memory — Spingarn Senior High in Northeast — and Kenilworth Elementary, in the middle of a neighborhood that last month won a

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\$25 million grant to strengthen local education and other services.

Thirteen of the schools will close at the end of this academic year, with the remaining two — Sharpe Health and Mamie D. Lee, schools for students with disabilities — to close in 2014.

On Thursday, Henderson for the first time offered an estimate of money to be saved through the closures: \$19.5 million in staffing costs. Approximately \$11 million will be needed for transition costs, Henderson said, resulting in a net savings of \$8.5 million.

The last round of closures, in 2008, cost millions more than initially reported, according to an audit released in August. Henderson said the school system is more confident in its savings estimates now.

The savings will be plowed back into schools to improve programming, including into libraries and arts and foreign language offerings, Henderson said, adding that the public will get a detailed view when school-by-school budgets are released in the coming months.

About 140 staff positions will be lost, but given normal attrition through resignations and retirements, Henderson said, “we actually feel like the loss will be minimal.” She said she does not expect any teacher evaluated “effective” to be out of a job.

The chancellor said she does not anticipate releasing any buildings from the D.C. Public Schools inventory. She said she needs to keep control of the facilities so they can be reopened as enrollment rebounds.

That news was maddening for charter school advocates, who often struggle to find suitable and affordable D.C. real estate. City law requires that surplus public school buildings be made available to charter schools.

“The mayor is making a mistake,” said Robert Cane, executive director of the pro-charter Friends of Choice in Urban Schools. “What we have here, it’s about defending DCPS from the popularity of the charter schools, and it has nothing to do with getting more kids into quality schools. Nothing.”

Henderson said her staff has plans for reusing some buildings, such as Spingarn, which will become a vocational education campus focused on transportation careers. But officials are still working on plans for many of the buildings.

The prospect of closures triggered intense debate in recent months about the future of the city school system, including at community meetings and two D.C. Council hearings that together lasted more than 14 hours.

Some parents, activists and politicians worry that shutting the schools will drive families into the city’s charter schools, which could lead to declining enrollment and further closures in the traditional school system. After the 2008 closures, thousands of children left the system for charter schools, according to a study by three think tanks.

The school system now enrolls about 46,000 students in 123 schools.

“We cannot repeat what happened

with the last closures,” said D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D). “DCPS has got to be much more aggressive than it was three years ago in retaining students and recruiting students.”

D.C. Council members will have a chance to quiz Henderson about her school closure plan Wednesday at the first hearing of the newly constituted education committee, which is led by David A. Catania (I-At Large).

Across the city Thursday afternoon, schools that had been slated to close cleaved into two groups: those that were spared, and those that were not.

“My kids like this school, and I don’t want to see them start over,” said Raheem Bates, 24, the father of two Kenilworth students.

A few miles away, Shannon Smith prepared for a protest at the chancellor’s home. Her two grandchildren attend Ferebee-Hope Elementary, which will close over the objections of parents and staff. “I don’t know why they would want to close this school,” said Smith, who called the move “ridiculous.”

But across town at Garrison, relieved parents hugged each other and high-fived their kids. Kierra McPherson, 23 wiped away tears as she picked up her preschool son. McPherson graduated from Garrison, as did her mother and cousin.

“It’s a tradition,” McPherson said. “This is my school. We got our school back.”

James Arkin and Alex Kane Rudansky contributed to this report.

Stakeholders in the Deaf Community

Stakeholders have an interest or investment in an idea, organization or business. Stakeholders may affect the group because of their concern and passion. Students are stakeholders in their education, their schools and community.

PART ONE

Today, you are asked to be a stakeholder in the deaf community. Consider each of these potential stakeholders. After each one indicate the role you would play as that stakeholder in relation to others and what expectations others would have from you.

- Deaf individuals
- Users of sign language
- Users of the cochlear implant
- Deaf parents
- Children of deaf adults
- Educators of the deaf
- American Sign Language interpreters
- American Sign Language teachers and students
- The hard of hearing
- Otologists
- Other:

PART TWO

Write a journal that describes your experiences with deafness or write what you know about it. Or take on the persona of one of the above stakeholders. What do you want others to know about you, your interests and concerns?

PART THREE

Read *The Washington Post* article, “Gallaudet University adjusts to a new culture that includes more hearing students,” by Daniel Devis. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/gallaudet-university-adjusts-to-a-culture-that-includes-more-hearing-students/2011/09/23/gIQAC3W9tK_story.html]

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the pros and cons of Gallaudet University’s increase of hearing students and deaf students with little experience using sign language?
2. Describe the political climate of Gallaudet University in regard to deaf culture and sign language?
3. Based on the article, do you feel that Gallaudet embraces integration of deaf students with command of deaf culture and sign language with deaf students with little to no experience?
4. Why is the use of the cochlear implant such a controversial issue within the deaf community?
5. If you had to choose to send your deaf child to a residential school for the deaf or have that child attend a mainstreamed program at a nearby school, which would you choose? Explain your answer.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program



Write a Human Interest Story

Newspaper content consists of news, editorial and opinion writing, advertising, and another large category called feature writing. These human interest stories are profiles, reviews, history or background stories, and essays that reveal the impact of the facts upon individuals, organizations and communities. They are often in the Style section, but may be published in any section of the newspaper.

You are a reporter for the Health pages. You are assigned to write a human interest story that profiles a stakeholder of the deaf community. It is your responsibility to find a source that you will feature. Consider any of the following stakeholders.

1. A deaf individual using American Sign Language
2. A deaf individual using the cochlear implant
3. A deaf individual using oral tradition of communication
4. A parent of a deaf child
5. The child of a deaf adult
6. An educator of the deaf
7. An American Sign Language teacher
8. An interpreter for the deaf
9. An otologist
10. Occupational therapists working with the deaf
11. Someone who writes closed captions on television

Draft a focus for your topic. Select the stakeholder who will guide your focus. Through this stakeholder, from the list above, you will gain insight into living with deafness or a loss of hearing.

Find a person who will be the focus of your human interest story and will help your readers to understand an aspect of being deaf or hard of hearing. This person represents the stakeholder groups and gives a face to your topic and focus.

Perform background research using websites or databases associated with your source. For example, if you choose an American Sign Language interpreter, go to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf website. Or the March 2014 new FCC rules to improve captioning quality will give you a news peg on which to form questions and to understand the job of being a closed caption provider. Do research to know the information that is available through online and print resources, to understand some of the issues, and to discern what you do not understand.

Formulate questions for your interview, including questions that answer the who, what, where, when, why, and how of your story. Design questions that will help you to understand information that you gathered during your research. This may include statements by your stakeholder, contradictions in your sources, or updates to what is found in your research.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Arrange and conduct an interview. Be prepared with your background research, questions and desire to meet this person. Dress like a professional. If you want to record the interview, be sure to ask when you arrange the interview. Ask follow-up questions. Following the interview, get your interview notes in order.

Compose your story, incorporating your research and relevant quotations from your source. Carefully consider the tone of your piece and make sure it does not read like a report. Be sure to include the *interest* in human interest.

Meet with a writing coach or read your feature aloud. Does your feature sound too much like a report? Or is the profile one-dimensional? Consider other people who are associated with your interviewee and perform brief interviews. For example, if interviewing a deaf student, try to talk to a teacher, parent, sibling or coach.

Share with two classmates. Act like a writers group to encourage one another, to discuss structure, to clarify information and to make edits. They will learn about a stakeholder and you will have refined your human interest story. Now you are ready to publish.

Where to Find Them

Consider these sources to locate stakeholders and other current information.

www.aslta.org

American Sign Language Teachers Association

<http://www.coda-international.org>

Children of Deaf Adults

<http://dclibrary.org/node/2483>

D.C. Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

www.gallaudet.edu

Gallaudet University

<http://www.odhh.maryland.gov>

Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

www.nad.org

National Association of the Deaf

www.nvrc.org

Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

www.rid.org

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

An Aid to Hearing

A cochlear implant bypasses the damaged part of the inner ear and sends signals to the auditory nerve, unlike a hearing aid, which amplifies sound.

