



Ward 5 Education Trust

Context

The Ward 5 Education Trust seeks to reinvigorate public education and accelerate student performance in the District of Columbia by providing critical financial support to Ward 5 area schools. Established by Zachary Parker, Ward 5 representative on the D.C. State Board of Education, in collaboration with his predecessor, Ward 5 resident and business owner Mark Jones, the Ward 5 Education Trust is slated to launch December 2020.

The Trust shall operate as a nonprofit philanthropic organization, aiming to raise and disperse resources to supplement funding provided to Ward 5 public schools. Funding allocation will be conducted through an annual application process, overseen by a board of directors or trustees. Improved student performance metrics (i.e., literacy levels, graduation rates, standardized summative assessment results) will serve as measures of school progress and the impact of the Trust's award(s). Over time, the expectation is that the Ward 5 Education Trust will serve as an integral factor in the progress and success of Ward 5 public schools.

Justification

Funding: Public education funding operates in several ways, including local, federal, and private funds, with the largest amount coming from local sources. The Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF), or the amount spent per student, determines school funding's largest allotment. The UPSFF serves as a baseline investment intended to cover the cost of general education services. The formula also includes extra weights for certain grade levels, English Language Learners, students with special needs, and students considered at-risk. To help schools meet students' needs, the base UPSFF is multiplied by the additional weighted amount, increasing the total amount given to schools. In addition to the UPSFF, public schools receive funds from various District agencies for school resource officers, nurses, mental health counselors, and legal services. The Department of General Services (DGS) provides construction and maintenance of DCPS school facilities.

Over the past five years, D.C. has seen small increases in the UPSFF, the most influential funding sources. With the high cost of living in the city, these increases are not enough to truly meet our students' and families' needs. Even the most significant increases fall well short of the level needed in the 2013 DC Adequacy Study, which suggests that DC should spend a base rate of \$11,600 per student.

Performance: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card, is the largest continuing, nationally representative measure of student achievement in core subjects in grades 4, 8, and 12. The District of Columbia participates in the NAEP assessment biennially. The assessment follows the frameworks developed by the National Assessment Governing Board, which specify what a student should know and do in a given grade. Since the assessments are administered



uniformly across the nation, with the same digital equipment and test booklets, NAEP results serve as a standard academic achievement measure.

According to the most recent NAEP assessment, D.C. is the fastest improving state in the nation over time. In fourth grade math, DC has gained nearly 30 points since 2003. What is more, DC Public Schools is the fastest growing school district in the country. Despite the progress our schools are making overall, the District fails to ensure every child has access to quality education — especially in Ward 5. According to the latest Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) results, Ward 5 area schools remain among the lowest-performing District schools, following Wards 8 and 7, respectively.

While the Ward 5 Education Trust will not remedy all issues schools face, the hope is that additional resources will alleviate financial pressure felt that will allow school teams to devote more time and the supports needed to improve student learning outcomes.

Governance Structure

The Ward 5 Ed Trust shall operate as an independent non-profit entity with 7-9 governing board members. Said members would develop bylaws and structures that will serve as the organization's governance principles.