



TO: Council President M. Lorena González, Governance & Education Committee Chair
FROM: Dwane Chappelle, Director of the Department of Education and Early Learning
CC: Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, Senior Deputy Mayor Mike Fong, Anthony Auriemma
DATE: August 4, 2020
SUBJECT: Responses to Council Questions for Reconfirmation of Dwane Chappelle as DEEL Director

Please see below for my responses to written questions transmitted by your office on July 15 as part of my reconfirmation process. It is an honor to serve the City of Seattle and its residents as the Director of the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) and I look forward to discussing these questions and any others you or your colleagues may have during the reconfirmation process.

1. What, in your opinion, are the primary challenges facing the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL)? What are the specific goals for DEEL over the next four years?

The biggest challenges facing the Department are impacts related to systemic racism and the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to see the effects of racism, implicit bias, and unequitable access to resources in our education system. The COVID-19 public health crisis has also led to an unprecedented City budget deficit, impacting families and workers, and disrupting traditional education service delivery in monumental ways. We know that COVID-19 has exacerbated the existing educational inequities in Seattle, making DEEL's ongoing work to **eliminate educational disparities for children and youth furthest from educational justice (FFEJ)** even more critical.

My primary goal as we navigate COVID-19 and build toward recovery is to lead my dedicated staff in a way that allows for innovation, collaboration, and equity as we reimagine the services we fund and pivot to meet the current and future needs of this community. This type of leadership will permeate the work of DEEL as we stay laser focused to ensure:

1. Educational disparities are eliminated for children and youth furthest from educational justice.
2. All Seattle children are kindergarten ready.
3. All Seattle students are college and career ready.
4. All Seattle students attain a post-secondary certificate, credential, or degree.

We remain committed to accomplishing the following goals over the next four years:

- *Infant and Child Care:* Increase utilization of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and identify ways to expand access to quality child care for families with infants and toddlers.
- *FEPP Levy:* Successfully invest FEPP Levy resources to expand the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP), supplement supports for K-12 learners, and implement Seattle Promise.
- *Seattle Promise:* Enhance the Seattle Promise experience as the program matures to ensure participating scholars receive all necessary supports to complete their first two years of college and have the opportunity to transfer to a four-year institution or move into the career of their choice upon achieving a certificate, credential, or two-year degree.
- *Results Based Accountability:* Implement a robust evaluation, assessment, and reporting process for all department investments that will empower DEEL to make continual improvements in the efficacy of our funding partnerships, ensure that we are making progress in our racial equity goals, and prepare us for a transparent and successful levy reauthorization process.

2. What is your general philosophy for working and communicating effectively with the City Council? How do you plan to ensure that Councilmembers and Council staff receive the information needed from your department to make policy and financial decisions?

DEEL staff and I view the City Council as an essential partner in executing our department's mission to improve the lives of Seattle children, youth, and families through strategic investments in education. In my time with the department, DEEL, the Council, and the Mayor's Office have rallied around our shared goals to ensure students receive the best resources we have to offer as a City. We've demonstrated this best through our efforts in building the FEPP Levy package and most recently, in our efforts to fund Emergency Child Care for essential workers during the COVID crisis. These united efforts have been some of my proudest moments as Director and have produced some of DEEL's most impactful work.

I have also appreciated the role of Council as a thought partner, whose valuable insight and questions challenge DEEL to come up with our best ideas. Our experience in the legislative process to develop the FEPP Levy Implementation and Evaluation Plan (Plan) was instructive, inclusive, and among our finest efforts. I enjoyed participating in Council-convened FEPP Levy town halls, which were a valuable opportunity to connect with community and share the good work DEEL is doing to impact children and families. The same is true of presentations to Council committee.

I remain committed to keeping the lines of communication open through regular meetings with Council President González, as Chair of the Governance and Education Committee, and our FEPP Levy Oversight Committee (LOC). I will also continue to ensure that Council staff have clear points of contact within DEEL to share pertinent information and that we are working efficiently to achieve positive outcomes for Seattle children, youth, and families.

3. In addition to other funding sources, DEEL makes significant educational investments through the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy. Please describe your thoughts on the importance of outcomes, program evaluations and assessments, RFP/RFQ/RFI investment decisions, and how community partnership plays a role in leveraging FEPP resources.

I am humbled by the opportunity to steward taxpayer dollars. This important role requires DEEL to place great emphasis on data and evaluation processes that measure investment and program impacts. As I mentioned earlier, one of my main goals is to integrate Results Based Accountability (RBA) through DEEL investments in the next four years, building on the FEPP Implementation & Evaluation Plan. RBA will inform everything DEEL does from coaching and technical assistance support, to competitive funding processes, and our performance-based contracts to deliver services.

As piloted by the Human Services Department, RBA will be integrated at the beginning of each RFP/RFQ/RFI process through the development of clear theories of change that connect investments to results. It will carry through to how we evaluate progress towards racial equity outcomes for every investment DEEL makes. Measurement of outcomes will then inform the responsive technical assistance and coaching DEEL offers to our community partners to equip them with the tools necessary to reach desired outcomes. RBA will also support DEEL's resolve to be bold when the time comes to reduce or terminate investments that do not achieve their intended outcomes.

Partnerships and relationships are foundational to all of this. DEEL serves primarily as a funder and convener. We cannot invest funds or deliver services without partners interested in working with us. We have taken great strides in the last year as FEPP Levy investments were being initiated to improve communication and

accessibility to our funding opportunities—including more timely website updates, offering both in-person and web-based information sessions, efficient Q&A processes, and inclusive funding review panels where we pay community members stipends for their time to participate.

4. Much of the work and programming of DEEL focuses on serving students and communities who have been historically underserved and furthest from educational justice; with investments by the City and State legislature’s “fix” of McCleary, what is the role of the City and DEEL to address the persisting opportunity gap?

The role of DEEL investments is to supplement and complement district educational services. In the 2019-2020 School Year, DEEL invested more than \$26 million in Seattle Public Schools District (SPS), which is approximately 2.5% of SPS’s \$1.04 billion operating budget. While DEEL investments alone cannot move the needle for all of Seattle Public Schools in closing opportunity gaps we use our influence as a funder and partner of SPS to target investments toward closing race-based opportunity gaps for students furthest from educational justice.

We work with the district, school leaders, community-based organizations, and parents to be sure that City funds are directed where the greatest need exists. All our funded partners share our commitment to address the persisting opportunity gap and increase equitable outcomes in kindergarten readiness, on-time high school graduation, and college and career readiness.

Recently, with the addition of Upward Bound and Seattle Promise to our portfolio, DEEL’s role expanded to support access to postsecondary opportunities and the completion of a certificate, credential, or degree for Seattle public school students. This is an exciting opportunity to sustain the gains from our early learning investments and provide supports to seniors as they navigate the transition from high school to college. As a former high school principal, it gives me great pride to know our Department is providing a critical opportunity to high school seniors that will increase their economic earning potential and close opportunity gaps in post-secondary attainment.

5. A strength of Seattle’s education and early learning eco-system is the relationships and partnerships between community-based organizations, institutions like SPS and DEEL, students, families, and advocates; please describe your approach to leading, collaborating, and learning in this eco-system to advance the goals of the City.

I’m committed to achieving vertical alignment of DEEL’s investments, that is, to connect our investments from preschool to postsecondary. I envision new ways of convening our partners for professional development by regional feeder patterns with a focus on PreK-to-5 and 6th grade-to-14th year (Seattle Promise). I also want to ensure that DEEL engages whole families, meaning, if you have a preschool-aged child and a Promise-aged child, you can learn about all the resources available to support your family seamlessly.

In October 2019, DEEL convened a K-12 community partner summit at Magnuson Park. This event brought together over 500 community partners, teaching artists, partner City department such as Human Services Department, Office of Arts and Culture, Office of Economic Development, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Seattle Public Libraries, as well as Seattle Public Schools leadership and principals. The goals of the event were to inform the community about the FEPP Levy and the various funding opportunities on the horizon, offer professional development opportunities and workshops, and to facilitate networking between SPS school leaders and the diverse, passionate, and innovative expanded learning and enrichment providers in our City.

Leading and facilitating these types of collaborative efforts and strengthening partnerships between our schools, school leaders, community partners, youth and families, and education advocates is a passion of mine and

something I look forward to continuing in the future. We know it will take all of us working in alignment and with great purpose to eliminate educational disparities in our community.

6. Our State's new Paid Family Medical Leave policy has sharpened the dialogue and challenges around access to childcare and infant care in Seattle for many families across the income spectrum; what ideas and suggestions do you have for the City to address the need for infant care and childcare access?

As a working dad of four, I know how important access to quality, affordable child care is to families in Seattle. Unfortunately, Seattle, like much of the nation, faces a shortage of childcare and infant care options for families. Due to lower required child-to-adult staffing ratios, licensed child care for children aged 0-3 is generally operated at a net financial loss, subsidized by older-age classrooms. This reality has led to low supply, high tuition to cover financial losses, and low wages for predominately female- and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) childcare workers.

I'm proud of DEEL's efforts in this space but acknowledge there much more to do to truly offer parents the care options needed. This is a priority of mine that I know is shared by City Council. Some of DEEL's historical and ongoing work in this sector includes:

- **Birth-to-3:** Through SBT and the General Funds, DEEL funds two home visiting models (ParentChild+ and Nurse Family Partnership) and Development Bridge program, to support families with children 0-3.
- **Child Care Assistance Program:** DEEL expands access to affordable childcare for working parents or parents advancing their education by providing subsidies toward the cost of licensed childcare.
- **Facility investments:** Appropriate space for child care is at a premium in Seattle. DEEL developed a capital facilities program as part of the initial SPP Levy to invest in high-quality, debt free facilities that increase the supply of child care. To date, the program, which has continued under FEPP, has provided grants to create over 500 new licensed child care slots.
- **Family Child Care (FCC) stabilization and expansion:** Seattle has nearly 400 culturally diverse licensed FCC providers. DEEL supports this community by funding a mentorship program with peer mentors for unlicensed providers seeking to become licensed and including FCCs in the Seattle Preschool Program. We also offer training, convene a city advisory council, and provide an adapted home visiting model (ParentChild+) tailored to this sector.

Our efforts in these areas will continue and we plan to strengthen our work in this space during the season ahead by conducting and reporting on national examples and strategies that increase access and affordability of child care for families with children 0-3, both in the formal and informal care networks. I look forward to submitting and presenting our recommended strategies to meet the need for infant care and childcare access to Council this December.

7. Many of the FEPP levy services were disrupted by the COVID19 pandemic; can you share what are some strategies DEEL will be taking to minimize the negative impacts from the disrupted 2019-2020 school year and what are some strategies in anticipation of the work ahead to continue and support SPP, K-12 students, and Seattle Promise participants in a partially re-opened city?

This is a major priority for DEEL. Our early learning staff is working with our Seattle Preschool Program providers to develop plans that allow for a fall reopening consistent with public health guidance. These plans will be flexible to ensure providers can provide safe environments for staff and the families they serve, while delivering

as much in-person instruction as possible to children. DEEL is also developing an online resource library for providers, teachers, and families to support remote, family-directed learning.

For our K-12 partnerships, DEEL has worked with our summer learning providers to make quick shifts to continue programming in virtual or hybrid spaces as public health guidelines allow. For example, we are supporting our partners in finding new ways of providing resources such as food assistance and meal delivery, access to basic needs, access to digital learning tools, delivery of books and supplies, provision of instructional learning supplies to be used at home, connecting with students and families, supporting social-emotional needs, and modifying academic support and tutoring to remote environments.

The Seattle Colleges, too, are adapting to the new COVID reality. The Summer Bridge, a core component of the Seattle Promise experience, is now being planned as a virtual event for Promise scholars. The Colleges are committed to ensuring a quality educational experience for Promise scholars and are adapting their instruction as needed.

We are also collaborating with City and external partners to improve digital access and equity. For example, DEEL staff have collaborated with SPS's digital learning staff and participated in the City's "Internet for All" work group. School-based health providers have pivoted to expand telehealth services and provide targeted outreach to assess health needs for students of greatest need.

Finally, DEEL has codified its emergency childcare procedures to ensure that we are able to stand up services within 48 hours of an emergency, such as the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" mandate.

The challenges to adapt to COVID-19 will continue this fall and we will continue to adapt the ways in which we support our partners to ensure that our target student populations receive the services they need despite modifications to that service delivery.

8. [The COVID19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities in our childcare system. What are the key strategies DEEL will take to maintain diversity of providers and options for non-traditional workers? What are key ways that DEEL can work with statewide partners to maintain childcare funding for more vulnerable populations, especially infant/toddlers and homeless children?](#)

DEEL has been engaged at the regional and state level with relief and sustainability efforts for our child care community and we know broad partnerships are necessary to sustain providers or expand access to care.

Since the beginning of COVID-19, DEEL has taken action and continued partnerships to support the City's childcare system. In addition to establishing the City of Seattle's Emergency Child Care program, DEEL partnered with the King County executive to administer the County's Emergency Childcare model. We made administrative changes to CCAP that allow providers to continue receiving subsidy payments for families who have uneven attendance as a result of COVID. We support the homeless child care program through Child Care Resources. We are developing new coaching, technical assistance and health consultation supports for our providers serving infants and toddlers which will begin this fall, and we continue to work closely with our colleagues at Public Health – Seattle & King County to ensure information related to safety and technical assistance for relief funding, such as Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and aid resulting from the CARES act, is distributed to child care providers in a timely way.

Moving forward, DEEL intends to continue engagement with our partners at King County through the Child Care Task Force. A regional approach is critical to ensuring our most vulnerable families have access to child care and receive the supports they need.

9. We are currently witnessing a mass movement demanding civil rights and addressing institutionalized racism and anti-blackness; what transformations have you identified for the City related to DEEL's body of work to undo institutionalized racism? What are some of the challenges to achieving this and what would you need from the City to eradicate barriers to achieve this vision?

Let me start by affirming that Black Lives Matter and Black Students' Lives Matter. DEEL's overarching goal is to **eliminate educational disparities for children and youth furthest from educational justice (FFEJ)**, with an emphasis on Black males, in alignment with the Seattle Public School District. The data indicates children and youth FFEJ in Seattle are Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino. This is not new data and these disparities have existed in our community and country since we started measuring academic outcomes. These gaps are not a reflection of ability, because we know our young students of color are capable beyond measure. These gaps reflect deeply embedded practices, perceptions, and policies which hinder the learning of Black and brown children. To eliminate opportunity gaps, DEEL centers children and youth FFEJ in our investments and embeds targeted approaches within our universal access programs.

One key barrier to eliminating race-based opportunity gaps, is the Washington State ban on affirmative action. This state ban, combined with limitations of federal law, restricts DEEL's ability to explicitly prioritize program enrollment for the racial and ethnic groups of young people that we know need our services most. In light of this ban, DEEL will continue to use income, language, and geography to target our investments towards communities of great need, while simultaneously trying to reduce income verification and documentation burdens on families enrolling in our programs.

The following are additional examples of how we are currently working to undo institutionalized racism and advance equity for students FFEJ:

- **Racial equity toolkits (RET):** As committed to in the FEPP Implementation & Evaluation Plan, DEEL is conducting RETs to inform program design and assess program impacts for a number of our investments including Seattle Promise and K-12 student homelessness.
- **Prioritized enrollment:** Both our CCAP and Seattle Promise program utilize income to direct resources to those of greatest financial need; in Seattle, these families are most likely to be from BIPOC communities. For our Promise scholars, Seattle offers the largest non-tuition equity scholarship of all Promise programs nationally. Within our Seattle Preschool Program, we are currently assessing how to prioritize enrollment for children FFEJ. DEEL's K-12 investments to promote college and career readiness and provide expanded learning opportunities require grantees to identify how they will enroll and best serve students FFEJ.
- **Ease of access and enrollment:** DEEL continually strives to remove operational barriers for families trying to access our programs; this includes reducing paperwork burden and simplifying application forms. We are currently assessing the feasibility of keeping parents on tuition subsidies even if they experience a temporary change in eligibility status, such as receiving a raise, losing a job, or graduating from school.
- **Educator diversity:** We know that students of color learn best from educators who look like them and share their lived experience. That's why DEEL is proud to invest in multilingual and diverse educator pathway programs, such as the Academy of Rising Educators, to increase educator diversity within SPS. We also fund continuing education for early learning educators, who are primarily women of color, to not only further their personal education, but to increase their earning potential and advancement within the sector.

- **Culturally specific and responsive programming:** The Kingmakers of Seattle program is a tremendous example of taking a national best practice, building community support around a concept, and then seeding innovation with City investment. This targeted program for Black male students facilitated by Black male educators at four SPS schools is creating tremendous culture shift within schools and will expand with FEPP funding.

We know that institutions such as City government and City departments bear great responsibility in not only recognizing the barriers to racial equity in our internal systems, but in actively dismantling them. We also know that it can be hard to see those barriers and dismantle those systems when we're so steeped in our own work. This is why I value so deeply our relationships with community and why I always take the time to listen to community concerns. DEEL cannot devise all the solutions or innovations on our own, but by living our departmental values of (1) results and racial equity, (2) stewardship, (3) collaboration, and (4) transparency, I know we will move closer to educational justice.