City of Seattle

Director
Department of Education and Early Learning

Confirmation Packet
July 29, 2025

Dwane Chappelle

July 29, 2025

The Honorable Sara Nelson
President, Seattle City Council
Seattle City Hall, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Nelson:

I am pleased to transmit to City Council this confirmation packet for my reappointment of Dwane Chappelle as Director of the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL).

This packet contains Dr. Chappelle's appointment, oath of office forms, and his resume. His background check remains on file with the Seattle Department of Human Resources.

As Director of DEEL, Director Chappelle has maintained strong strategic partnerships with Seattle Public Schools, institutions of both early and higher learning, and other education providers and community partners throughout the region. Feedback from stakeholders from across the span of the public education system about Director Chappelle has been overwhelmingly positive, specifically regarding his spirit of collaboration, open and transparent communication, and deep experience in the field. Under his leadership, DEEL has continued its mission to improving outcomes for all Seattle children.

During his tenure, Director Chapelle has overseen the incredible growth of the City's award-winning Seattle Preschool Program, growing capacity from 283 children across 15 classrooms to nearly 1,900 children across more than 150 classrooms in the 2024-2025 year. Since its inception, more than 400 first-generation college students have enrolled in Seattle Promise, a program Director Chapelle was instrumental in the creation of. Over 1,500 Seattle Promise Scholars enroll in post-secondary education each fall thanks to his and his team's efforts.

Dr. Chappelle currently shepherds the implementation of the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy, which Seattle voters last overwhelmingly approved in November 2018, and just facilitated the development of the 2024 Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise renewal package in partnership with my office and Councilmember Rivera The 2025 proposed levy adds 800 new childcare slots (for a total of 1,400) and 600 new seats (for a total of 3,100) in the Seattle Preschool program. Additionally, the renewal proposal provides expanded learning opportunities, student safety supports, and access to medical and mental health services for K-12 students, and continues the successful Seattle Promise program.

Anyone who has spent time with Dr. Chappelle knows that he brings sincerity, empathy, kindness, and a core resolve to help every student succeed. I trust that after reviewing his materials, meeting with him, and following Councilmember Rivera's diligent Libraries,

Education & Neighborhoods Committee review, you will decide that he is well suited to continue serving as Director of our Department of Education and Early Learning.

If you have any questions about the attached materials or need additional information, Deputy Mayor Tiffany Washington would welcome hearing from you. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Harrell
Mayor of Seattle

City of Seattle Department Head Notice of Appointment

Appointee Name: *Dwane Chappelle*	
City Department Name: *Department of Education and Early Learning*	**Position Title:** *Director*
☐ **Appointment** ***OR*** ☒ Reappointment	**City Council Confirmation required?** ☒ **Yes** ☐ No
Appointing Authority: ☐ City Council ☒ **Mayor** ☐ Other: *Fill in appointing authority*	**Term of Position: *** Council Confirmation **to** 8/1/2029 ☐ *Serving remaining term of a vacant position*

Background: As Director of DEEL, Doctor Director Chappelle has maintained strong strategic partnerships with Seattle Public Schools, institutions of both early and higher learning, and other education providers and community partners throughout the region. Feedback from stakeholders from across the span of the public education system about Director Chappelle has been overwhelmingly positive, specifically regarding his spirit of collaboration, open and transparent communication, and deep experience in the field. Under his leadership, DEEL has continued its mission to improving outcomes for all Seattle children.

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Authorizing Signature: Bruce A. Harrell **Date Signed:** July 29, 2025	**Appointing Signatory:** *Bruce A. Harrell* *Mayor of Seattle*

**Term begin and end date is fixed and tied to the position and not the appointment date.*

Dwane Chappelle, Ed.D. Seattle, WA [redacted]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Distinguished education executive with nearly a decade of transformational leadership as Director of Education and Early Learning for the City of Seattle. Under my strategic direction, Seattle has emerged as a national model for comprehensive, equity-centered education policy spanning early learning through post-secondary pathways. I have successfully stewarded over $636 million in public investments while forging unprecedented collaborations between city government, school districts, higher education institutions, and community partners.

My tenure has been marked by measurable impact: expanding nationally recognized early learning programs, dramatically improving K-12 outcomes for students of color, launching innovative college access initiatives that exceed national benchmarks, and pioneering youth mental health investments. As the Mayor's chief education advisor, I have positioned Seattle at the forefront of educational innovation while maintaining unwavering focus on racial equity, fiscal responsibility, and community-driven solutions.

With proven expertise in large-scale policy implementation, public-private partnership development, and cross-sector collaboration, I bring a unique combination of educational leadership experience, administrative acumen, and deep community trust that has enabled sustained progress across Seattle's educational ecosystem.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Strategic Education Leadership & Policy Development
- Multi-Million Dollar Budget Management & Fiscal Oversight ($650M+ Portfolio)
- Cross-Sector Partnership Development & Stakeholder Engagement
- Racial Equity & Social Justice Implementation
- Early Learning Through Post-Secondary Program Innovation
- Data-Driven Performance Management & Accountability
- Legislative Advocacy & Government Relations
- Community Engagement & Public Communication
- Crisis Management & Adaptive Leadership
- Workforce Development & Economic Mobility

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City of Seattle – Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL)
Director of Education and Early Learning | 2016 – Present

As the Mayor's principal education advisor and department head, I provide executive leadership for citywide education strategy, policy development, and implementation across all educational levels. My role encompasses strategic planning, budget oversight, intergovernmental relations, and community partnership development to advance educational equity and excellence for all Seattle residents.

Signature Achievements & Measurable Impact:

Financial Stewardship & Resource Development:

- Led Seattle's Largest Education Investment in History: Successfully secured voter approval for and implemented the $636.5 million Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy (2019-2026), representing the largest education levy in city history
- Expanded Revenue Streams: Secured additional $20M+ in Payroll Expense Tax funding for youth mental health services, diversifying the city's education investment portfolio
- Demonstrated Fiscal Excellence: Maintained consistent on-time, under-budget program delivery while achieving or exceeding performance targets across all funded initiatives

Early Learning Excellence & Innovation:

- Achieved National Recognition: Elevated the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) to earn consecutive National Gold Standard Awards, positioning Seattle as a model for high-quality early learning
- Scaled Program Reach: Expanded SPP enrollment from initial pilot to serving over 2,000 children annually, with strategic growth plan to reach 2,500 by 2026
- Advanced Quality Standards: Implemented comprehensive teacher professional development, family engagement initiatives, and curriculum enhancements that exceed state and federal quality benchmarks

K-12 Academic Success & Equity:

- Directed Targeted Academic Investments: Allocated $113.6 million annually in levy funds to support culturally responsive education, wraparound services, and academic acceleration programs
- Reduced Achievement Gaps: Partnered with Seattle Public Schools to implement data-driven interventions that have measurably improved outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and students of color
- Enhanced Student Support Services: Launched comprehensive summer learning, school-based health services, and family engagement programs that address holistic student needs

Post-Secondary Access & Success:

- Created the Seattle Promise Program: Designed and launched groundbreaking initiative providing two years of free tuition at Seattle Colleges, serving as a national model for place-based college promise programs
- Achieved Exceptional Outcomes: Seattle Promise participants demonstrate college completion rates that exceed national averages for similar programs, with strong retention and transfer success
- Built Seamless Pathways: Established coordination mechanisms between high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions to support student transitions and success

Innovation in Youth Mental Health:

- Pioneered Comprehensive Mental Health Investment: Led development and implementation of $20M+ youth mental health initiative, expanding school-based services, telehealth access, and violence prevention programs
- Addressed Critical Needs: Responded to the youth mental health crisis with evidence-based interventions that have increased access to services and improved student wellness indicators
- Built Sustainable Infrastructure: Created lasting partnerships with healthcare providers and community organizations to ensure ongoing mental health support

Partnership Development & Systems Alignment:

- Forged Historic Collaborations: Developed unprecedented partnerships with Seattle Public Schools, higher education institutions, philanthropy, business community, and grassroots organizations

- Aligned Resources and Priorities: Created a coordinated approach to education investment that maximizes impact and eliminates duplication across sectors
- Enhanced Community Engagement: Implemented inclusive decision-making processes that center community voice, particularly from communities of color and families experiencing economic hardship

Rainier Beach High School, Seattle, WA

Principal | 2011 – 2016
Led comprehensive turnaround efforts for a historically underserved high school, focusing on academic rigor, community partnership, and student success. Managed all aspects of school operations including curriculum, staffing, budget, and community relations while championing equity and excellence.
Transformational Achievements:

- Implemented International Baccalaureate Program: Successfully launched IB curriculum in 2013, dramatically increasing college readiness and academic rigor
- Achieved Remarkable Academic Gains: Increased on-time graduation rate from 50% to 79%, surpassing district averages and establishing sustainable improvement trajectory
- Earned National Recognition: School received 2016 School of Opportunity designation and multiple School of Distinction awards (2015-2018)
- Generated National Attention: School transformation featured on PBS NewsHour and HBO's "Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas," highlighting successful equity-focused education reform
- Built Community Pride: Led boys' basketball team to three consecutive state championships (2012-2014), fostering school spirit and community engagement

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) | Gonzaga University
- Master of Education in Secondary and Higher Education | Texas A&M University-Commerce
- Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice | Grambling State University
- Principal Certification | Texas Woman's University
- Principal Turnaround Leadership Certificate | Harvard University
- Family Engagement in Education Certificate | Harvard University

RECOGNITION & HONORS

- National Gold Standard Awards for Seattle Preschool Program Leadership
- Led Passage of Historic $636.5M Education Levy - Largest in Seattle History
- Seattle Promise Program National Recognition for College Completion Excellence
- Keynote Speaker at National Education Policy Conferences and State Summits

- Equity Champion Award for Advancing Racial Justice in Education
- MLK Prayer Breakfast Mountaintop Awardee
- Community Leadership Recognition for Public-Private Partnership Development

BOARD AFFILIATIONS & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Committee Chair | Seattle Education Levy Oversight Committee
- Board Director | YMCA of Greater Seattle
- Board Director | Southeast Youth & Family Services
- Board Member | King County Children & Youth Advisory Board
- Leadership Council | UNCF Seattle
- Member | Mayors' Education Policy Advisors Network
- Member | Center for Children & Youth Justice – LINC
- Mentor & Advisor | The Breakfast Group

References and detailed performance metrics available upon request

CITY OF SEATTLE ▪ STATE OF WASHINGTON

OATH OF OFFICE

State of Washington

County of King

I, Dwane Chappelle, swear or affirm that I possess all of the qualifications prescribed in the Seattle City Charter and the Seattle Municipal Code for the position of Director of the Department of Education and Early Learning; that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Washington, and the Charter and Ordinances of The City of Seattle; and that I will faithfully conduct myself as Director of the Department of Education and Early Learning.

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Dwane Chappelle

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this ____ day of _____, 2025. [Seal]

_____

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk