



AJE UPDATE

Summer 2016

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AJE Mission:

Advocates for Justice and Education seeks to empower families, youth, and the community to be effective advocates to ensure that children and youth, particularly those who have special needs, receive access to appropriate education and health services.

About AJE:

AJE is the federally designated Parent Training and Information Center and the Health Information Center for DC. Have questions? We are here to help! Contact us:

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(Tuesday & Thursday only)

Recent Changes in Procedural Safeguards for Parents—News You Need to Know!

In March 2016, Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) updated the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*, which is the document that provides basic information to DC parents about their procedural rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This update was triggered by new DC special education laws, some of which went into effect on March 10, 2015 and others on July 1, 2016. Below are summaries of key safeguards that parents should know:

Laws that took effect March 10, 2015

Notice of Change of Location: Before changing a student's location of services, schools must provide parents with details regarding the proposed change, reasons for the proposal, and written information about parent's procedural protections.

Copies of Documents and IEPs: Five days prior to the meeting, schools now must provide parents with all documents that will be discussed at an eligibility, Individual Education Program (IEP), or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting. If the meeting is scheduled less than five days before the meeting, schools must provide the documents to parents no less than 24 hours before the meeting.

No later than 5 business days after an IEP meeting at which a new or amended IEP has been agreed upon, the school must give parents a copy of the IEP. If the IEP has not been completed by the fifth business day (including that it has not been translated, if needed), the school must give parents a copy of the latest available draft IEP and a final copy when it is completed. In all instances, the school must give parents a copy of the final IEP within 15 business days.



Observations: With certain restrictions, parents or their designees can now observe their child in the child's current or proposed special education placement.

Laws that took effect July 1, 2016

Expert Witness Fees: parents who win their special education hearing may recover reasonable expert witness fees up to \$6,000. However, fees still will be denied if the court finds that the litigation was frivolous, unreasonable, without foundation, or brought for an improper purpose. In such a case, the court could award expert fees to the school.

Burden Shift: When there is a due process complaint about the appropriateness of the actual or proposed IEP or placement, the school has the burden to prove the IEP or placement is appropriate. However, the party requesting the due process hearing (usually the parent) still has the burden of production, meaning to make their case first before the burden shifts to the school.

For more information about the new procedural safeguards visit the OSSE website: <http://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards> AJE staff are also here to help you with your questions!

Updates at DCPS - *Chancellor Kaya Henderson Announces Resignation*



After serving DC Public Schools (DCPS) for the past nine years, Kaya Henderson has announced she will be leaving her role as Chancellor on October 1, 2016. In a letter addressed to DCPS Parents and Community Members, Henderson stated she is ready to take on new challenges, while being entirely confident in the DCPS team to drive forward in their work under new leadership. She highlights the most memorable moments of her time at DCPS not as the statistical accomplishments or rising test scores DCPS has achieved over the years, but rather the people she has met and the experiences she has had. Mayor Bowser has selected Chief of Schools, **John Davis** to serve as the interim Chancellor beginning on October 1st. In addition to being a DCPS parent, with a strong commitment to serve all students, John has over two decades of experience in education as a teacher, principal, and district leader. Mayor Bowser announced the formation of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Rising Leadership Committee, a review panel that will serve and assist the Mayor during the process of selecting a new Chancellor. An executive search firm, Boyden, will work collaboratively with Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) Jennifer Niles to identify the best candidate for Chancellor. District residents can stay engaged by visiting dcpsrising.dc.gov. This will be a central place where residents can get information about the search, provide input on their DCPS priorities, and candidates can get connected to the search firm. <http://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-announces-details-search-dcps-chancellor>

New Principals

DC Public Schools is excited to announce the addition of 20 new principal appointments for the upcoming 2016 - 2017 school year. New principals are selected through a competitive screening and interview process involving school communities and families. For more details on each new principal feel free to visit this link: <http://dcps.dc.gov/page/principal-announcements-school-year-2016-2017>

Michael Alexander

Washington Metropolitan High School

Sah Brown

Eastern High School

Stephanie Byrd

Payne Elementary School

Tia Corniel

Burroughs Elementary School

Greg Dohmann

Jefferson Middle School Academy

Vanessa Drumm

Langley Elementary School

Kristie Edwards

Randle Highlands Elementary School

Eric Fraser

Anacostia High School

Terri Fuller

Plummer Elementary School

Aqueelha James

Roosevelt High School & MacFarland Middle School

Johann Lee

Kimball Elementary School

Andrea Mial

Miner Elementary School

Justin Ralston

LaSalle-Backus Education Campus

Andrew Smith

Ludlow-Taylor Elementary School

TaMikka Sykes

Amidon-Bowen Elementary School

Clinton Turner

Walker-Jones Education Campus

Isamar Vargas

Eliot-Hine Middle School

Courtney Wilkerson

Sousa Middle School

Benjamin Williams

Ron Brown College Preparatory High School

Kiana Williams

Smothers Elementary School

Start of School for DCPS & Charters:

DCPS now has 11 "Extended Year Schools" whose First Day of School will be Monday, August 8th (with PK3 & PK4 starting on Thu, Aug 11). The **Extended Year Schools** are:

Garfield ES	Thomas ES
HD Cooke ES	Hart MS
Hendley ES	Johnson MS
M.L. King ES	Raymond EC
Randle Highlands ES	Kelly Miller MS
Turner ES	

Questions on these programs?

Email: extendedyear@dc.gov

All other DCPS schools will have their first day on Monday, August 22.

Looking for **Charter School** start dates?
Click on this link for the full list:

www.dcpccb.org/blog/back-school-2016-17

Summer Slide—How to Avoid It!



No matter the city or state, the end of the school year is a time of excitement for students. It is the beginning of summer fun—pools, barbecues and much more. However, those in the teaching world view this as the time where students tend to lose a majority of the information they gain during the school year.

What can we do to help prevent this so called “**summer slide**” that researchers say is so common among our students? It has been noted that students are most successful if they engage in some sort of regular enrichment program throughout the summer.

DC offers many types of these programs across the city. There are summer enrichment programs offered through DC Public Schools (DCPS), DC Parks and Receptions (DPR) summer camps, and many other programs offered through colleges/universities, and non-profit organizations, and most services can be obtained at little or no cost.. Many schools provide a suggested reading list for our youth to encourage summer “fun” reading.

Help your child by having them involved in some type of enrichment program. Structured enrichment projects and activities will keep their minds active throughout the summer.

For more information visit this website: <https://www.dactionforchildren.org/blog/summer-vacation-break-school-shouldnt-mean-break-learning-0>

Helping Our Students Cope with the Violence Surrounding Them

From airport bombings to police shootings and neighborhood violence, our lives are inundated with negative images that appear on social media and in the news. These events are deeply depressing and disturbing experiences that may have real and lasting impact on brain development and psychological well-being, particularly in young children. They may feel overwhelmed, unsure of how to process their feelings and unsafe in the world. They need help from trusted adults to develop the tools to navigate the world around them. The following article outlines steps caregivers can take to help the young people in their lives process difficult news events:

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/nine_tips_for_talking_to_kids_about_trauma

Educators can also prepare for conversations that may arise when students return to school in the fall:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/how-should-teachers-and-parents-talk-to-kids-about-police-violence/2016/07/09/ac7fea1a-451f-11e6-bc99-7d269f8719b1_story.html



Finally, adults don't forget your emotional health is important as well. The same tips for processing and self-care are applicable to you!

AJE is here for you all year long!

As the federally designated Parent Training & Information Center for Washington DC—our mission is to empower families, youth, and the community to be effective advocates to ensure that children and youth, particularly those who have special needs, receive access to appropriate education and health services.

Our Vision includes: Successful Children, Healthy and Informed Families, Supportive Communities and a Strong Organization. Call us, email or come visit us today—we are here to help!

AJE-DC

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Girls and Young Women Face Unique Challenges in Our Schools

There has been a great deal of media coverage recently about how women are still struggling to achieve equal pay in the workforce, and how sexual harassment remains an issue for women at work and in public spaces, but did you know that girls and young women are also facing unique challenges in our schools?

When many people think of the school-to-prison pipeline, they are thinking and talking about young men of color, but did you know that young women of color are also dramatically affected by this issue and have been for many years?

Between 1985 and 1997, Black girls were the fastest growing segment of the juvenile population in secure confinement. By 2010, Black girls were 36% of juvenile females in residential placement. During these same periods Black girls also experienced a dramatic rise in per-district suspension rates. Between 2002-2006, per-district suspension rates of Black girls increased 5.3 percentage points compared to the 1.7 percentage point increase for Black boys. Among the nation's 10 highest suspending districts, **Black girls with one or more disabilities experienced the highest suspension rate of all girls.**

—Monique Morris, *Race, Gender and the School-to-Prison Pipeline*

According to the ACLU's recent analysis of DCPS data, Black girls make up the second highest percentage of suspensions (35% of suspended students) after Black boys (58%).

Sexual assault on college campuses has also been in the news a lot recently, but many of the provisions of Title IX that protect victims of sexual assault on college campuses also apply to students in the Kindergarten to 12th grade setting. Statistics show that sexual assault and sexual harassment don't just become problems for girls in college, they are challenges that they faced all along as they went through elementary, middle and high school.

Pregnancy continues to prevent many young women from graduating from high school on time, even though schools are required to make accommodations for pregnancy under a variety of laws. Pregnancy and motherhood are frequently cited as the reason girls don't finish high school at all.

How can we, as parents, guardians, mentors and other

adults who care about young people respond to and use this information about the challenges facing girls and young women in schools?

- We can **listen** to the girls and young women in our lives.
- We can **model** appropriate behavior and healthy relationships.
- We can talk to all of our young people about **consent**; what it is and why it matters.
- We can **educate** ourselves and our children about the law, and the right of all of our children to be free from sexual harassment and assault at school, and to have equal access to educational opportunities, by learning more about Title IX and the D.C. Human Rights Act.

Despite these challenges, women are enrolling in college at record numbers. According to the Department of Education, over 50% of Black women ages 18-24 are currently enrolled in higher education and Black women lead all groups in college education enrollment. With continued efforts and work, this progress will continue and we will see improvements in the outcomes and experiences of our girls in our schools.

For more information –

Race, Gender and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Expanding Our Discussion to Include Black Girls, by Monique W. Morris, available at <http://schottfoundation.org/resources/race-gender-and-school-prison-pipeline-expanding-our-discussion-include-black-girls>

Leaving Girls Behind – An Analysis of Washington D.C.'s "Empowering Males of Color" Initiative, by the ACLU and available at <https://www.aclu.org/report/leaving-girls-behind>

Pushout: the Criminalization of Black Girls in School by Monique W. Morris <http://www.moniquewmorris.me/http://knowyourix.org/title-ix-in-high-school-the-basics/>

Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School, by Catherine Hill and Holly Kearl, available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED525785.pdf>

By the numbers: sexual violence in high school, by Claire Gordon, available at: <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/articles/2014/11/14/by-the-numbers-sexualviolenceinhighschool.html>

<http://www.clutchmagonline.com/2014/02/know-black-women-lead-groups-college-enrollment-watch/>

DC Summer Meals Program

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is known in Washington, DC as the **DC Free Summer Meals Program (FSMP)**. It provides free nutritious meals and snacks served to children 18 years and younger. These meals are meant to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer months, because while school may take a summer break, hunger doesn't! The Summer Meals Program fills the gap between missed meals that would typically be served as part of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program during the academic school year. This DC program has served over 1 million meals to children and youth in DC over the past three summers.

Use this website link to find a summer meal site near you: www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks

Healthy Summer Snacks

The days are long, the sun is hot and kids need fuel. Summer is a wonderful time to try out new recipes and introduce new snacks into the rotation. We've gathered some of our AJE staff favorites:

Fruit Smoothies

Smoothies are a great opportunity for kids to get creative and try new fruits and vegetables. Add yogurt for a dose of calcium and be sure to use frozen fruit to eliminate the need for ice! Be sure to try this delicious Berry and Banana smoothie!

<http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/berry-banana-smoothies>

Veggies and Hummus

Whip up these ingredients for a delicious hummus paired with healthy dippers such as carrots, peppers, and sugar snap peas.

<http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/happy-hour-hummus>

Supreme Delight

Add jam, honey, or berries to a single serving of plain yogurt. Feeling adventurous? Add a few unsalted nuts or even a sprinkle of uncooked oatmeal. It's healthy, economical, and delicious!

Chocolate-Granola Apple Wedges

Braeburn, Gala, or Fuji apples stand up to dipping and this classic recipe takes a twist on a classic with the addition of granola!

<http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/chocolate-granola-apple-wedges>

Crisp and Spicy Snack Mix

This simple snack mix has just enough spice to tickle the taste buds, but not so much that it overwhelms young eaters.

<http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/crisp-spicy-snack-mix-1000000577151/>

Peanut Butter-Banana Spirals

If there are no peanut allergies in your family, this is sure to be a favorite! Peanut butter is the star of this recipe along with banana, yogurt, and wheat germ for a nice crunch.

<http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/peanut-butter-banana-spirals>

Balsamic Cucumber Salad

Keep as cool as a cucumber by trying out this yummy cucumber salad this summer.

<http://www.bnd.com/living/food-drink/article89313622.html>

Visit the AJE website (www.aje-dc.org) for these recipes and a special recipe with a story—Roasted Tomato Soup!





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Here We Go—Back to School!

Starting the new school year can be a time of great excitement... and anxiety. Help calm your child's fears (and your own) with these teacher-approved tips.

Meet the new teacher

For kids, one of the biggest back-to-school fears is "Will I like my new teacher?" Breaking the ice early on is one of the best ways to calm everyone's fears. Take advantage of your school's open house or back-to-school night. Send an email or call, let the teacher know a few things about your child, their likes, dislikes and whether they are excited for school or nervous. Check out your school's website—many have the teacher photos posted and you can show your child.

Tour the school

If your school hosts an open house, be sure to go! Familiarizing your child with the environment will help ease nerves. Together you can meet her teacher, find her desk, or explore the playground. With an older child, you might ask him to give you a tour of the school. This will help refresh his memory and yours.

Connect with friends

A familiar friend can make all the difference when heading back to school. You might try calling parents from last year's class and finding out which children are in your child's class this year. Refresh these relationships before school starts by scheduling a play date or a school carpool.

Tool up

Obtain the class supply list and take a special shopping trip with your child. While keeping basic needs in mind, allow for a couple of splurges like a cool notebook or a favorite-colored pen. These simple pleasures make going back to school a lot more fun.

School supply lists also provide great insight into the schoolwork ahead. Get your child excited about upcoming projects by explaining how new supplies might be used.

Avoid the drills (and the stress)

While it is important to support learning throughout the summer, don't spend the last weeks of summer vacation reviewing last year's curriculum. All kids need some down time before the rigors of school begin. For some kids, last-minute drills can heighten anxiety, reminding them of what they've forgotten instead of what they remember.

Ease into the routine

Switching from a summer to a school schedule can be stressful to everyone in your house. Avoid first-day-of-school mayhem by practicing your routine a few days in advance. Set the alarm clock, go through your morning rituals, and get in the car or to the bus stop on time. Routines help children feel comfortable, and establishing a solid school routine will make the first day of school go much smoother.