

The DCPS Teaching and Learning Framework and Student Learning

Each school district in the United States, including the DC Public Schools, has a set of student learning standards that represent the core of what learners should be able to do and understand across grade levels and subjects. These standards provide a purpose and discrete set of goals for teachers to address student learning.

With the release of its Teaching and Learning Framework, DCPS has provided pedagogical and professional standards for faculty and staff. Rather than simply reviewing learning goals, we now have a document that clarifies a set of instructional practices that will help our students meet and exceed the expectations outlined in the learning standards.

There are three key elements of the DCPS Teaching and Learning Framework: plan, teach and increase effectiveness. The planning element includes preparations around instruction and the learning environment such as developing student goals, preparing assessments (prior to instruction), identifying lesson-specific learning objectives to ensure student success of those assessments, and adopting clear procedures and routines to maximize active learning. The teach element focuses on content delivery, both in terms of lesson structure and individual student engagement. Finally, “increase effectiveness” refers to the use of assessment to first determine, and then respond (through planning and teaching) to student needs in an ongoing way.

The implementation of the Teaching and Learning Framework at Janney will support our three key practices for the year: inclusion, efficacy and purposeful decision-making. The Framework sets clear pedagogical goals, and staff members will be actively supported in their pursuit of these goals through targeted professional development and opportunities for collaboration. The assessment component manifests in the DCPS evaluation system (IMPACT) and, more importantly, through regular cycles of informal observations and feedback.

As has been noted in previous articles and conversations, research tells us that teachers have the most impact, regardless of other factors, on student learning. Therefore, the development of best instructional practices will positively impact that student learning. Perhaps equally important is the culture of learning – for students, staff and parents – that this Framework supports, as we at Janney reach toward our vision of becoming a “community of learners.”