

**LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) NAME:** Elsie Whitlow Stokes CFPCS

**BOARD CHAIR NAME:** Dr. Antione Davis Smith

**SUBMISSION DATE:** April 1, 2025

**SUBJECT (choose one):**

☒ Mission Statement Amendment Request

☐ Mission Statement and Educational Approach Amendment Request

## **SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

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**Campus name(s):** Elsie Whitlow Stokes CFPCS

**Year(s) opened:** 1998

**Grades served:** PK3-5th

**Year the school will undergo its next charter review or renewal:** SY 2027-2028

### **Proposal summary:**

The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School seeks approval to revise its official mission statement to more accurately reflect the school's educational model and long-standing values. The updated mission incorporates key components of the Stokes experience—dual-language immersion, academic excellence, community service, and a commitment to justice—while aligning with DC PCSB's new ASPIRE accountability framework. This revision does not reflect a change in programming, but rather brings the formal mission into alignment with the school's strategic vision, daily practice, and community identity.

**Year the school plans to adopt the proposed changes:** School Year 2025-2026

**When did the school's board approve the proposed changes?**

*March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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**1. In the table below, write the school's current and proposed mission statements.**

<b>Current Mission Statement</b>	<b>Proposed Mission Statement</b>
The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School prepares culturally diverse elementary school students in the District of	<i>The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School prepares students in the District of Columbia to be global leaders,</i>

Columbia to become leaders, scholars and responsible citizens who are committed to social justice.	<i>scholars and responsible citizens who are committed to justice in their communities and throughout the world.</i> <i>Stokes School teaches children to think, speak, read, write and learn in two languages: English and French and English and Spanish. With a dual focus on academic excellence and community service, Stokes School accomplishes its mission by creating an environment of achievement, peace and respect for all.</i>
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## 2. What is the school's rationale for changing its mission statement?

The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School is updating its mission statement to bring our official language into alignment with the school's long-standing educational philosophy and daily practice. While the original mission on file with DC PCSB captured an important aspect of our work—preparing students to be leaders, scholars, and responsible citizens committed to social justice—it did not include the full scope of our mission as we have communicated and lived it within the school community for many years.

Specifically, the previous version did not include reference to:

- Our dual-language immersion model in English and either French or Spanish;
- Our commitment to academic excellence through the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme;
- Our emphasis on community service and student-led action, particularly through the 5th Grade Exhibition project;
- Our holistic approach to global citizenship and justice that extends beyond traditional civic engagement.

The updated mission incorporates this broader vision while maintaining the values at the heart of our work: equity, multilingualism, leadership, and service. The language has also been streamlined to better reflect the school's global outlook and the evolving educational and social context in which we operate.

In addition, DC PCSB's new ASPIRE accountability framework requires charter schools to align their school-specific performance measures with their official mission statements. Stokes School intends to develop school-specific performance measures focused on two key areas:

1. The IB Exhibition Project, through which students demonstrate their commitment to justice by engaging in student-initiated actions that support themselves, others, and justice in their broader communities; and
2. The Emotional Support domain of the Pre-K CLASS observation, which reflects our emphasis on fostering respectful, nurturing environments aligned with our core values.

Both of these performance measures are deeply connected to our dual-language immersion model and the broader educational philosophy that has always defined the Stokes experience. Updating the mission statement ensures clear alignment between our vision, instructional practices, and the outcomes we aim to measure.

**3. Describe the school's philosophy for educating students. Include how the school ensures all students—including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level—benefit from the proposed mission statement and the school's educational philosophy.**

At the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School, we believe that every child deserves access to a rigorous, affirming, and inclusive education that prepares them to lead in a complex, interconnected world. Our philosophy centers on nurturing the whole child through a dual-language immersion program, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme, and a deep commitment to justice, community service, and social-emotional development.

We intentionally create a learning environment rooted in achievement, peace, and respect for all, and we maintain high expectations while differentiating support to meet the diverse needs of our students.

Our updated mission reflects the educational philosophy we have upheld for years. By emphasizing global leadership, multilingualism, and community-rooted justice, the mission speaks to the development of skills, knowledge, and mindsets that are essential for success in school and beyond—especially for students from historically marginalized communities.

To ensure that all students benefit from this philosophy:

- **Students with disabilities** receive inclusive, individualized supports that are aligned with their IEPs while being fully integrated into the classroom community. Our inclusive practices ensure access to both the academic and social-emotional components of our program.
- **English learners** thrive in our dual-language model, which affirms multilingualism and strengthens literacy in both English and either French or

Spanish. Our staff uses scaffolding, sheltered instruction, and targeted intervention to support language development.

- **Economically disadvantaged and at-risk students** benefit from a community-centered school culture that prioritizes belonging, identity, and access to opportunity. Our school-wide SEL program, extended learning supports, and family partnerships ensure that barriers to learning are addressed proactively.
- **Students above and below grade level** receive differentiated instruction, including enrichment and intervention, to challenge and support them appropriately. Teachers use ongoing formative and summative assessments to monitor growth and adjust instruction accordingly.

Our updated mission statement explicitly names the values and educational practices that have always guided our work. It provides a clear, public commitment to preparing every child to be a bilingual scholar, a responsible citizen, and a changemaker in their communities and the world.

**4. Will the proposed mission statement impact curricular choices, including resources, assessments, standards, and instructional strategies?**

No

**If so, complete questions 4a and 4b.**

- a. **Identify the new curricular choices the school will adopt and provide a rationale for the curricular shift.**
- b. **Describe the long-range plan for curriculum implementation and professional development. How will the school ensure implementation fidelity?**

**5. How did the school engage its internal community in revising the mission statement? Include evidence demonstrating student, staff, and parent support for the proposed changes.**

Stokes leadership is committed to ensuring that any updates to our mission reflect the values and voices of our full school community. While the language changes are modest, we understand the importance of transparency and inclusion when it comes to our shared identity and vision.

To that end, the mission revision process was grounded in the school's broader strategic planning work, which included:

- Community-wide surveys that gathered input from families, staff, and students about the school's strengths, priorities, and long-term goals;
- Focus groups and listening sessions with key stakeholder groups, including educators, families, and members of the Board of Trustees;
- Ongoing conversations during staff professional development and leadership team meetings about how to articulate the core practices and values that define Stokes.

Following approval of the revised mission by the Board of Trustees, the school launched a community feedback form to collect reflections, questions, and affirmations about the updated language. We also invited discussion and dialogue through campus-level PTO/PTA meetings on April 2, where school leadership will be available to respond to community feedback in person.

## **EDUCATIONAL APPROACH**

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- 6. Describe the school's proposed educational approach and philosophy for educating students.**
- 7. How does this approach differ from the educational philosophy or methods the school articulated in its charter application and/or agreement?**
- 8. What is the rationale for the educational shift?**
- 9. How will the proposed educational approach impact curricular choices, including resources, assessments, standards, and instructional strategies?**
  - a. Identify the new curricular choices the school will adopt and provide a rationale for the curricular shift, if applicable.**

- b. Describe the long-range plan for curriculum implementation and/or professional development. How will the school ensure implementation fidelity?**

**10. How will the school ensure all students—including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level—benefit from the proposed educational approach?**

**11. How will the school ensure its proposed educational approach will result in successfully meeting its charter goals and academic achievement expectations?**

**12. How did the school engage its internal community in redeveloping its educational approach? Include evidence demonstrating staff, student,<sup>5</sup> and parent support for the proposed changes.**

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<sup>5</sup> Schools that do not enroll young adult and adult students need not demonstrate student support for the proposed changes.

**ELSIE WHITLOW STOKES COMMUNITY FREEDOM**

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

**Board of Trustees Minutes**

**March 8, 2025**

**Trustees Attending:** Carlos Bonner, Kevin Bryan, Ami Richardson , Beatris Carballo, Morgan Hensley, Stan Johnson, Aricka Porter, Dr. Antione Davis Smith, Tim Smith, Bisi Oyedele

**Staff Attending:** Bobby Caballero, Erika Bryant, Bill Moczydlowski, Linda Moore, Julia Senerchia, Maribel Wan

**Welcome & Purpose:** Board Chair, Dr. Antione Davis Smith, opened the meeting at 9:33 a.m. and welcomed participants. Dr. Davis Smith welcomed the newest trustee, Kevin Bryan.

**Minutes and Agenda Approval:** Stan Johnson made a motion to open the meeting and Kevin Bryan presented the second. Kevin Byran and made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 2025 board meeting and Morgan Hensley the February 5, 2025 meeting. The motions were seconded by Ami Richardson and Beatris Carballo, respectively and passed unanimously.

**Committee Reports:**

- ***Finance Committee Report***

Bill Moczydlowski introduced the new Director of Finance, Stewart Harrington. Bill presented the financial forecast, forecasting 5.7% more income than what was anticipated and a \$1.3M increase in experiences. Much of that was due to an increase in special education enrollment and an increase in government grants. However, enrollment fell several students short of what was anticipated, thus reducing anticipated income. There is an anticipated deficit of \$211,000 but this would be reduced if the non-cash rent line item were to be removed. Morgan Hensley and Carlos Bonner raised concerns about the volatility of the budget and the sustainability if expenses increase. Carlos Bonner, Board Treasurer, noted that the data presented today reflects the current fiscal year, rather than the SY25-26 budget, which will be presented at the May board meeting and will provide a better picture of the forecast for that year

The Finance Committee discussed the impact of unfilled budgeted positions and potential saving from these positions. The committee also noted the underestimation of fundraising income in the current budget. Tim White recommended aligning fundraising efforts with those areas where government funding is decreasing,

Stewart Harrington presented an explanation of the East End campus lease.

- ***Governance Committee Report:*** Ami Richardson introduced Kevin Bryan to the school community. In addition, the governance committee has reached out to prospective members of the board committees.

- ***Academic Excellence Committee report***

Maribel Wan reported on the recent IB visit. Stan Johnson indicated that the Academic Excellence Committee will request a standard operating procedure for committees.

- **Development Committee**

Erika Bryant reported that the school is expect to receive the report of FundEd's assessment of the school's development function soon. Ms. Bryant t has conducted interviews with prospective committee members,

- **HR Committee**

Dr. Davis Smith conducted an interview for a potential committee member.

- **Head of School Report**

Bobby Caballero presented the report.

- Linda Moore recently was awarded the UnSung Hero Award from the Dunbar-Horace Mann High School Alumni Association in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- The Kaboom! Brookland Playground build is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>. Trustees are invited to participate.
- French Night at the Washington Wizards' was successful. Sold over 100 tickets. Stokes students stood with players during national anthem.
- DCI Buddy Day. We learned that next fall there will be enough spaces for all graduating Stokes students to attend DCI.
- The East End campus celebrated Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) this month to promote literacy.
- In February, the Brookland Campus hosted Friendship Ball, one of students' favorite student activities.
- Black History Month celebrations took place at both campuses.
- Stokes School is the beneficiary of the Trust Public Land initiative, which will transform the East End field into a playground.
- The IB Accreditation Visit was highly successful.



- Fifth graders from East End students recently had an overnight visit to Hard Bargain Farm.
- Astronauts from the Dragon Endeavor visited the Brookland campus this week and explained a variety of scientific concepts.
- March's First Friday Event
- Alumni on the Move: Inti Vizuela is an accomplished composer, who has written for orchestras throughout the world.
- Coming Events: French v Spanish Basketball Game today; Trust Public Land Initiative: East End PTO fundraiser at the French Embassy to raise funds for East End students' participation in the study tour.

**Closed Session:** At 10:42 AM, Dr. Smith proposed an adjournment of the open meeting so that the Board could enter a closed session to discuss trade secrets and other confidential matters. All trustees agreed to the motion, and the meeting moved into closed session.

During the closed session, the Board discussed the proposed revision to the school's mission statement. A motion to adopt the updated mission was made by Aricka Porter and seconded by Ami Richardson. The motion was unanimously approved by all trustees present. The closed meeting was adjourned at 12:06 PM.

**Resumption of Open Meeting:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm, with motion by Morgan and second by Beatris. The motion passed unanimously and adjourned on at 12:08.

***The Open Meetings Act governs this meeting. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at [opengovoffice@dc.gov](mailto:opengovoffice@dc.gov).***

***The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Saturday, May 3, 2025 – 9:30am.***