

D.C. Schools Chief Resigns Amid School Transfer Scandal

By Corey Mitchell on [February 20, 2018, 5:17 PM](#)



UPDATED

District of Columbia public schools Chancellor Antwan Wilson will resign this week after little more than a year on the job.

A majority of the D.C. City Council called on him to resign after it was revealed last week that his family bypassed the city's school lottery system so his daughter could transfer into a sought-after high school.

Wilson helped draft a policy to address the issue of high-ranking officials receiving special treatment in the school transfer process. But he promptly broke that policy within months, circumventing district protocol to secure a spot in a coveted high school for his own child, jumping in front of hundreds of other families on a waitlist.

Wilson issued a public apology, asking for D.C. residents for forgiveness. But the mea culpa wasn't enough to save his job. The outgoing chancellor is the second person in the city to resign over the scandal.

D.C. Deputy Mayor of Education Jennifer Niles, who arranged the transfer for Wilson's child, will resign from her post at D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser's request. Bowser also said she referred the matter to the Board of Ethics and Government and the D.C. inspector general.

With Wilson's departure, [Amanda Alexander](#) will take the helm as the interim schools chancellor. Alexander has served as the district's chief of the office of elementary schools. She also served as a central office administrator under former chancellors Michelle Rhee and Kaya Henderson.

Wilson, who began his tenure in the D.C. schools in February 2017, previously served as superintendent in the Oakland, Calif., district and as an assistant superintendent in the Denver public schools. He came to the East Coast with a reputation as a national leader on social-emotional learning issues. But now he's headed out the door without leaving a significant imprint on the schools in the nation's capital.

Wilson also inherited a [graduation scandal](#) that placed another set of school system practices under the microscope. Roughly one-third of graduates in the class of 2017 should not have received a diploma because they missed too many classes or improperly took makeup classes, a report from the D.C. office of the inspector general found.

District officials have not yet determined how long the teachers and principals in the district had felt pressure to award diplomas to students who clearly had not met graduation criteria.

Photo: Antwan Wilson speaks at a news conference at Eastern High School in Washington in 2016 when his selection as the city's new schools chief was announced. --Andrew Harnik/AP-File