

DC Public Schools Lose Dennis Hawkins in Metro Collision

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Washington, DC - Dennis Hawkins, from the staff at John Greenleaf Whittier Elementary School in northwest Washington, DC, was among those killed in the Metro train collision earlier this week. He was a frequent commuter on Metro and died in the neighborhood where he worked.

Mr. Hawkins mentored parents, students and staff through his limitless civility and unerring thoughtfulness. These rare human attributes were the essence of his life of work in education. Above all, Mr. Hawkins was diligent in the care of the children. His particular diligence is most commonly attributed to those senior enough to know that good graces in simple ways advance all with whom they interact. Whether from age or wisdom, he set an example for the kids. With great personal grace and good will, Mr. Hawkins would immediately engage to resolve any issue brought to his attention at the school, by the children or the care-givers. Mr. Hawkins exemplified the highest attributes of those engaged in education at the District of Columbia public school system. Memorial services have not yet been made public. The business office at Whittier Elementary is taking contact information for those wishing to be notified of services at 202 576 6156.

Eight others killed in the collision were: train operator Jeanice McMillan, 42, of Springfield, Virginia; Mary Doolittle, 59; Lavanda King, 23; Veronica Dubose, 26; Cameron Williams, 36; and Retired Maj. Gen. David F. Wherley Jr. and his wife, Ann, both 62, all of Washington, DC; and Ana Fernandez, 40, of Hyattsville, Maryland.

The National Transportation Safety Board is currently investigating the cause of the train collision. All Metro trains are now being operated in manual mode. It is not yet confirmed if automated operations contributed to the loss of life. Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority Board Chair Jim Graham [District of Columbia Council, Ward One] has convened the Metro board for briefings by investigators and will move for board action based on the findings of the NTSB and WMATA. It is a shared dream that through application of the kind of educated intelligence Mr. Hawkins embraced so lovingly, steps will be taken to make the safest form of transit, public transportation, perfectly safe.

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CONTACT:

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